STREAMS OF ETERNITY,

OR, THE

MYSTICAL WATERS

OF

LIFE AND DEATH:

IN

TWELVE DISCOURSES

ONTHE

FILIAL FEAR of GOD,

THE

FOUR LAST THINGS OF MAN,

AND

The Different REFLECTIONS to be made thereon, as They severally concern the RIGHTEOUS and the WICKED.

In all thy Works, remember thy Last Things; and Thou wilt never sin. Ecclesiasticus chap. vii. ver. last.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

THE following Discourses were not at first designed for either Pulpit or Press, but for a mere moral amusement to myself, in consequence of an impression left on my mind by the scriptural passage I have chosen for a general text to them all-namely-A river issued out of the place of pleasure, to water paradife, which thence is divided into four heads. I thought I clearly faw there a Ariking analogy, or proportional similitude, between the amenity of earthly paradife and the beauty of Grace in a Virtuous Soul. -Between the friendly river of that garden and the Fear of the Lord, or kindly fountain of life, granted to the Good towards cherishing within them that piety which constitutes their spiritual paradise in this life: -as also between the four extensive heads which finally divided the stream of Eden, and the four aweful Subjects of Spiritual Alarm, which now divide the religious fears and hopes of every thinking Christian. And when I reflected on the natural import of the appellations Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates, and compared their radical meanings with the respective natures and circum-stances of Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven,

Heaven, I was still more persuaded that the whole Passage might be taken as an allusion, in the figurative Sense, to the Last Things

of Man.

This it was that determined me at length to commit my thoughts to writing, to try whether in reality the allegory which thus presented itself to my mind was sufficiently Solid to enable me, in a series of regular connected Discourses, to support the allusion to the end. In fact upon trial I found it was fo, and found the task I had undertaken so very easy a one, that, instead of wanting either Art or Study to dragg my fubjest after me, I had little more to do than to follow That, amidst the clear and abundant Lights which multiplied before me at every step. I divided the matter into five separate but correspondent discourses; the first on the Fear of God, to answer to the river of Eden, which I considered as a figure of it; and the subsequent four on the four last Things prefigured in the four Heads into which that river became divided. In doing which I found the allegory every where so confistent, natural and easy, that, without ever having occasion for wresting any Passage or straining any Text to illustrate it, or for mutilating or distorting one single Quotation to drag it to my purpose, I compleated my plan ere I was well aware of it; and saw the five Discourses begun and finished finished in nigh as short a time as was re-

Convinced, by those Discourses, of the strict propriety of the allegory I undertook to explain, and That Conviction being the only Point I purfued in composing them, I threw them afide as soon as finished; and had almost forgotten that I had any thing by me of . the kind till some years after, that I happened to be sollicited to preach to a very numerous congregation: When reflecting on them again, and hoping that others might reap as much Spiritual benefit from hearing them, as I had from their composition, I resolved to utter them successively to the Public in their first artless, unlaboured and unpolished Form. Moreover recollecting, that the Middle State of some of God's departed Elect has no small connection with the Last Things of man, I thought it would neither be unacceptable nor unuseful to my auditors (nor indeed quite unnecessary) to introduce between the Discourse upon Hell and That upon Heaven, a distinct One concerning that intermediate State; efpecially as a remarkable Passage in the Prophet Joel (chap. iii. ver. 19) favoured my doing it without breaking the thread of the Allegory I had carried through my other Discourses from the aforementioned Text. And farther to render the whole more practically and effectually useful to my Hearers, I judged it advisable to add (as in fatt I did, by way

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way of Conclusion to this whole course of spiritual Instructions) a Seventh Discourse, which might enable Persons of the meanest capacity to make a proper application of the several doctrines therein contained to their own respective personal exigencies, according to the state which every one should chance to be in,

whether of Grace or Guilt.

Such was the original Form of these Discourses. For it was not till I set about printing them, that (for the Reader's ease) I divided the Seven into Fourteen. And That I did with little other alteration than—the Addition of a sew words of Conclusion to the First Part, and a short Introduction to the Second part of every one of the original Seven, to give them the consistence of separate discourses;—and the placing my Resections on a Middle-State at the end of the Work, by way of Appendix, as not being strictly a Part of what is commonly understood by the Last Things of Man.

The spiritual Fruit I hoped for from the Utterance of these Discourses in their primitive shape, I was so far from being disappointed of, that (besides the universal, and perhaps more than deserved, approbation they met with from a constant crouded Audience made-up of Persons of all religions and ranks) I had the unspeakable consolation to be physically certain (as far as the heart of man can be known by his words and his actions)

of their occasioning, under God, the serious and steady Conversion of several orthodox Christians from an inveterate habit of sin to a life of truly religious piety. Hence I was encouraged to repeat them some time after to another large audience of the same promiscuous kind, and with the same success; though still without the least design of trusting them and myself to the venomous Talons of Envy and Malice and Pseudo-criticism, by committing them to the press: Till at length the repeated Solicitations of many Persons of both Congregations urged me to do That out of Scruple, which ever so little Vanity would have sufficed to keep me forever from doing.

I was not insensible of the advantages which the weakest productions often derive from a spirited justness of delivery; and therefore could not be certain that the applause, these discourses met with in the pulpit, might not be owing chiefly to some share of propriety in the utterance of them. For I was so far from being conscious of perfection in the composition itself, that an absolute want of leisure (and perhaps of talent) to make these discourses as compleat as the matter deserves, would have determined me to suppress instead of publishing them; but that I was conscious they could not do barm, and had feen by experience that they might do some good, at least among such well disposed Persons as are capable of respecting religious Truth in ever fo mean and awkward

a dress: And therefore I resolved to conquer my repugnance; that I might not become answerable to God for refusing to be accessary in some degree to the spiritual Good of mankind; and That through the servile Fear of bringing into question my Abilities as a Writer. These and only these were the Motives which induced me to print the following Discourses, which I now present the Public with in the plain and home-spun garb I have been able to afford them.

According to what I first proposed they should bave been published the beginning of last Winter; and they infallibly would have been fo, but for the very grievous and lingering Illness of many months duration, which it pleased that all-wise Being to lay upon me, who, whatever Man may propose, bas the sole and supreme right of disposing. And this, I flatter myself will abundantly clear me with the Public of any culpable breach of my promise in that particular. But indeed I have reason to think, I am already acquitted; confidering the encouragement, which spite of that delay, these Discourses have met with, notwithstanding the immense pains and various artifices, which, with a peevish industry more worthy of pity than anger, have been clandestinely exerted, though in vain, to put every body out of conceit with the work even before its appearance. However as I have no notion of building on ruins, for Charity's fake I forbear to bint at the Author's of such conduct, or at the humble InInstruments and means they have stooped to employ: Especially since they have had so opposite an effect that I am indebted to them for the Names of many, who would probably never have known of the Work but for their sanguine

attemps to suppress it.

I shall content myself therefore with observing that the misplaced ridicule, which for want of other matter they have taken so much idle pains to fasten on the allegorical Titles I bave given to the Work and Appendix (namely the Streams of Eternity, - the Waters of Life and Death, - the Torrent of Thorns) are probably owing to their want of knowing, or at least of reflecting, that the Work itself being introduced and partly carried on with an Allegory, Propriety demanded, that the Titles prefixed thereto should also be partly allogorical: And that those which I have made use of are such figurative Expressions as are founded upon Scripture: Nay that That of the Appendix is Scripture itself; being (according to the Latin Vulgate and Doway Version) the express words of the Prophet Joel, chap. iii. v. 18.

So likewise they probably forgot, or at least affected to forget, that I have for my sanction in the use of those titles the example of many Fathers of the Church in their pious Works: Witness (among the many) the City of God by St. Augustin; the Golden Chain by S. Thomas of Aquin; the Gloomy Night of

the Soul, by S. John of the Cross: - as also of innumerable eminent and orthodox Divines, both antient and modern, foreign and domestic, who have distinguished some of their fpiritual works by figurative Titles, answerable to the matter they treat of : fuch are among the many the following excellent works. the Uncreated Dove of Costaguta, The Porches of the Probatical Fishpond, by Peter of Madrid, The Eccho of the pacific Trumpet, by Venceslaus of Poland; the Mystical Temple of the Holy Ghoft, and the Arrow of divine Wrath by two eminent Italian Divines: the Cynofura or Saving-star: the Triple Cord, the Catholic Bee hive, and the Garden of the Souls, by worthy Divines of our own Country, the Last of which is bappily yet living. And none affect more (perbaps not so much) this kind of Titles to their religious Productions than the members of one Letter'd Society in particular, which would be grievously concerned to have it supposed that any of its Writers have been capable of Impropriety. It were endless to instance the majority of them, and therefore let it suffice to name the following few, viz. the Mystical Rose, by Vieira: the Paradise of the Soul, by Bellarmin, and his Moans of the Dove anfivered in the Redoubled Voice of the Turtle by Gravina All which must certainly bave escaped the Recollection of these who bave been so liberal in their censures of son the

the Titles given to these Discourses, or they would probably have spared themselves the ungraceful convulsion of an unseasonable Laugh.

For furely they will not deny, that there are in a spiritual and figurative Sense fuch Things as Streams of Eternity and Waters of Life and Death, and that the facred Scriptures are full of myfical allufions to them? Of what but a part of those mystic Streams can Isaiah be supposed to speak when he fays (according to the common English Translation) there the glorious Lord will be to us a place of broad rivers and streams, or (according to the Doway Verfin) there our Lord is magnifical, a place of floods, rivers most broad and wide? Of what but of the mystic waters of eternal Life does St. John Speak, where he describes the pure river of WATER. of Life - proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb? And finally what is more common among the Interpreters of Holy Writ than to understand by the Waters of Gall, with which the Almighty allegorically threatens the Wicked, a mystical figure of the Waters of everlasting Death? the food. the deluge of miseries (as it is so frequently filed) which will forever overwhelm the reprobate? So apt is censoriousness to find fault without a cause. So liable to expose itself by laughing out of time and place. But what will not peevishness hazard in nibbling at the fairest productions where Pique against b 2 the

the Author is to be gratified, though ever fo

unjustly conceived.

I shall make no apology for the figurative Rile I have bere and there made use of throughout these Discourses: For I bumbly presume I want none. Nothing is more common with the greatest fathers of the Church than to illustrate their spiritual Doctrines with allegories drawn from Holy Writ: And it is to this pious practice we owe some of the sublimest Instructions they have left us in point of morality. Wherefore, though it may not be wife to make too free with mystic allusions, lest the illiterate vulgar should pervert them to Fanaticism, the Ministers of the Gospel cannot do better than sometimes to copy from those illustrious patterns, by enforcing their moral dostrines with the figurative Truths of the divine Writers; provided they take care that the allegories they draw from thence be not against the express Letter, nor contrary to found Faith and Morals, but perfectly confonant to every part of God's Holy Word and tend to the improvement of true Religion and Piety: That the Faithful by being in some measure accustomed thereto, may be the better able to relish and comprehend the sublime documents already left us by the Holy Fathers and Doctors. For it cannot be denied, that the facred Scriptures every where abound with allegorical Meanings, big with important Infiructions; which would fill escape our Penetration

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tration bad not those industrious ministers of God taken the pious pains to unfold many of them to us. And many no doubt there still are, not the less pregnant for being as yet unexplained. Nay, with all due submission to the Church's authority, it is my bumble opinion, that there is not a fingle literal paffage in the whole Divine Code both new and old, that does not teem with some figurative Sense full of saving truth. For the rest, the usefulness of allegory stands sufficiently asserted by our Divine Lord himself, who frequently used it; as when be called himself a vine, a way, &c. and as when he conveyed his facred Doctrines to his Disciples in the parables of the Sower, of the Husbandman, of the prodigal Son, and many others.

If it be objected, that " all the above Paf" fages are absolutely mysterious, and some of
" them by no means to be understood in a lite" ral sense; and therefore recourse must be
" bad to Allegory to render their mystical or
" figurative allusion intelligible: whereas
" where a passage is perfectly intelligible in a
" literal sense, whether moral or historical,
" there can be no occasion, or even room, for
" recurring to allegory to explain it;" I
answer, that there are many Passages in Holy
Writ, which are manifestly true and intelligible in a literal sense; and which nevertheless may
and ought to be understood also in a figurative
one. To deny this were to arraign the Testi-

mony of St. Paul, who positively tells us that the two passages in Genesis relating to the Births of Isaac and Ishmael are of that number,—which Things (says the Apostle) are

faid by an allegory.

In short it is highly probable, that we may fay of all the works and words of the Holy Ghost in the Sacred Scripture both New and Old what St. Augustin fays of those of our Saviour; where upon these Words of St. JOHN (There are many other things also which Jesus did: Which, if they were written in particular, not even the World itself, I think, would be able to contain the books which must be written.) The Holy Doctor bas this Observation: "Our Lord JESUS " Christ, says he, intended that the things " which he did corporally should be understood " in a spiritual Sense. For be did not even " work miracles purely for the fake of the mi-" racles : But that they might be subjects of " admiration to those who beheld them, and " Lessons of Truth to those who understood " them."

Indeed as to the particular allegories in this work and its appendix, I by no means advance them for the only ones, or even the best, which can be gathered from the respective Texts; but purely for such as have occurred to me; and therefore am not anxious to have them universally espoused. Nor have I made such use of them in a familiar style but that the most illi-

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illiterate may find matter enough for their spiritual entertainment, if they do but perule them with condour and christian fimplicity. For the reft, if the Talk I have undertaken be but lamely executed, it certainly is not for want of richness in the subject; but of genius in the author: which I should be glad to fee the public made amends for by some other Divine's taking it in band, who is possest of more leifure and blest with greater Endowments. In the mean time I readily own that all the little good there is in this humble treatife is intirely His, from whom alone all good proceeds; and all Indelicacies, Inaccuracies and Deficiencies my own: All I have to flatter myself with being, that there is nothing in it contrary to the Faith and moral Doctrine of that Church in the obedience to which I bope to live and die.

Not that I think myself infallible. On the contrary, I know of no Infallibility promised to any private member of God's Church, nor do I think any man sit to attempt the important office of instructing others, who is above seeking Counsel and instruction from others. And for this very reason (according to my invariable rule) that I might not, by trusting wholly to my own feeble Lights, deserve to be abandoned by heaven to the spirit of error; before ever I trusted these sheets to the press, I chose to get them inspected by some of the Church's most authorized as well as ablest

Divines: And I am not ashamed to own that. I have reason to be pleased with having done so, as (thanks to their candour and advice) the

Work itself is the better for it.

I am not injenfible bow much I am indebted to the generofity of All, who have contributed to the Publication of this work, spite of the obstacles thrown in their way: Nor how jealous it becomes every minister of God to be, of being outdone in the practice of a virtue, He should be the first to set the example of. Wherefore though I engaged only to fend them their copies in sheets, I hope they will indulge me the liberty of caufing them to be delivered ready bound; as the only means I have to express my acknowledgement. And I beg them to be offured, that, though all my earthly dependance be upon the Altar I serve (notwithstanding all ungenerous infinuations to the contrary) no fordid lucre ever had, or ever shall have any influence over my endeavours for the spiritual Service of the public.

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LAST THINGS OF MAN.

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In Two INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSES.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

A river issued-out of the place of pleasure, to water Paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: (Gen. ii. 10.)

THE literal sense of this passage, revered Auditors, is so obvious, that it needs no explanation. Every one knows, that our almighty Creator made man originally an innocent perfect creature, and designed him to be forever free, forever happy, on the single condition of persisting in his native innocence. To this end in fact He placed him, as soon as created, in a garden of delights; the generous soil of which wanted neither toil nor culture to make it fruitful, or to keep it so. One river therefore might well suffice for the refreshment of that blessed land and its inhabitants.

bitants. And accordingly my text fays that a fingle river is ued-out of the place of

pleasure, to water Paradife.

AT the same time God in his infinite discernment knew, that mankind would foon pervert their freedom to their ruin, and urge his Justice to banish them from Eden into a land of misery, which would afford them no means of folace or of fuffenance, but what they should force from its reluctant bosom, by dint of sweat and sabour. Wherefore, unwilling to abandon this his favorite work almost as soon as out of his creative hand, he previously prepared the remedy against their future indigence, by graciously disposing that the waters of that fingle river, when once out of paradife, should thenceforth be divided into four distinct beads, to soften their distresses, and second their labour with a diffusion proportioned to the dispersion and wants of their prescribed generation.

How brightly does not the divine Creator's Goodness here shine-forth, in deigning to make so liberal a provision before hand for the temporal exigencies of human nature, even in its state of proscription! But oh! what a new flood of glory will not that Goodness display to us; if, diving into the allegory contained in the words of my text, we contemplate the wondrous providence he vouchsafed to exert in favour of man's eternal concerns; by jointly prepar-

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ing for the whole ungrateful species the means of avoiding irrevocable ruin even after the forseiture of the spiritual paradise

he had planted within them.

. THE spiritual paradise of Adam was his native state of innocence: a state abounding with every inward sweet: a state alike exempt from every guilt and pain, and wanting no other fource to make and keep it truly fruitful in unallayed content, than the holy Fear of God. God therefore provided him in that guiltless state with the fingle stream of religions Awe, conveyed to him in that easy plain commandment :-- Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou Shalt not eat: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And this fingle stream, if duly minded, would have been sufficient to fix his happiness forever. But alas! as the pfalmist has observed, man when he was in bonour, did not understand. On the contrary, fo little did he know himself, that he presently fell from his allegiance to his divine Sovereign; forfeited his birth-right; and losed with his innocence the two-fold paradife bestowed upon him,-That of the flesh, and That of the spirit.

ALAS poor haples human nature!
Thus woefully impaired in body and deprayed in soul, what must have been thy wretched irreparable lot; if God from that time had measured-out his suture bounties

to thee, only in proportion to thy former gratitude? Whence had'ft Thou drawn the Waters of eternal life; if He, in just chaftisement of thy past prevarication, had thenceforth totally with-held from thee, as he might have done, the only life-producing fpring, the filial Fear of him. (thanks to his unmeasurable mercy!) this was not the case. No: his boundless Love remaining still inestably triumphant over our guilt, he would not confine the blissful source of a religious Awe of Him precifely to our state of innocence; but kindly caused its influence to reach us, even in our state of degeneracy: - No longer indeed in one unparted stream, as at the first; but severed into four distinct ones; each calculated to excite and fecond in Us the godly practice of spiritual vigilance and industry.

Thus then, just as in favour of human nature's animal existence, the river of Eden, while gently gliding within the peaceful limits of that beauteous garden, was big with the principles of undecaying life; but, once it passed those privileged borders, became divided into four distressful sources of vicissitude, amidst the jaring efforts of generation, corruption, abortion and defection: So in like manner, the holy Fear of God, while serenely slowing within the guiltless soul of man, was a rich tide of joyous certain immortality; but once it lest that blessed

bleffed boundary, its current became divided into four alarming Heads of mortal fadincertainty: — namely — the apprehension of Death;—the dread of Judgment;—the terror of Hell;—and the solitary hope of Heaven, amidst unnumbered and incessant

risks of losing it. do mint and are and radi

THOUGH the present degeneracy of human nature makes it (alas!) too much to be apprehended (oh Christians!) that most of you have heretofore forfeited the spiritual paradife of your baptismal innocence; your late behaviour during Lent, but especially on Good-Friday last, makes me hope, that you have drawn the Waters of a fincere repentance from the fountains of your Saviour's bitter bitter Paffion. Now therefore I confider You no more as under the forfeiture of your eternal birth-right, but rather as re-instated in all its choicest prerogatives. Now, methinks, not You are placed again in a terrestrial paradise; but a new kind of paradise is placed in You: a paradife of fuch firm joy, as only peace of conscience can bestow and never fails to give. If then This really be your happy case; God from his everlasting seat of pleasure (the abys of his eternal Love) has fent forth a-fresh the enlivening stream of his holy Fear, to water and improve that paradife within you. Yours then henceforth must be the business to improve the influence of that mystic riyer; by drawing from the Heads, into which it

it is now divided, constant recruits of sortitude to persevere with a religious awe in his holy love and service. Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven are the grand Heads on which your christian hopes and sears depend: Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven therefore are the main objects I mean to fix

your contemplations on.

NEVERTHELESS, that I may not launch too abruptly into one or other of those deep-lying currents, I shall by way of introduction begin with a more gentle kind of navigation. In my present and next difcourse therefore I purpose to confine my thoughts entirely to the holy Fear of God; and alike in both, I mean, Christians, to invite you All, to follow in spirit along with me the peaceful progress of that mystic river; Which if you do, I shall hope to convince you, ere we come to a final anchor (that is, ere we put an end to our present course of reflections), that the frequent confideration of your Last Things will be the best means to preserve and improve the perfect Fear of God in your breasts. enve laised availation, and sulpined recov

Thou then, oh fovereign Source of goodness, who deignest to fix a paradise of grace and peace within the hearts of all who love thee! youchsafe to overslow the soil of thy own planting, with the enlivening waters of a holy Fear of Thee; that replenished with a godly reverence for Thee Thee in this world, all our employment in the next may be to praise and love thee without end or measure.

Too ample a confidence in his present fecurity and too little circumspection against future instability were the first grand dispositions towards Adam's exclusion from And the like principles will have the same tendency in You, my friends; unless, cautioned by his fall, you are careful to avoid his mistake. A river issued-out of the place of pleasure to water paradise : and the natural fluidity of its rolling tide should have been (one would think) a sufficient warning to Adam, that inconstancy was coeval with earthly felicity, and that created nature even in Eden was not exempt from the dangers of viciflitude. For-the reftless flate of that fugitive stream was an obvious hint to him, to trace its liquid progress down to the utmost borders of his peaceful abode; those borders where it began to divide itself intofour distinct beads. And if Adam had taken the useful hint in time; what an immenfity of woe might he not have spared both himself and us! Had he followed the retreating flood along the margin of its primitive channel down to those heads to which it was making its way; he would have found them to be so many sources of reafonable forecast. He would have seen, that all beyond the limits of that delightful garden

den was a dreary Wild affording no prospects but of labour and hazard and forrow and care. The near comparison of that foreign fituation with his own would have taught him the real value of his then prefent happiness, and the possiblity of losing it: It would have helped him to reflect, that fince the fource of his earthly delights was of fo unfettled and fluctuating a nature, those delights themselves must be subject to caution: It would have rouzed him, in a word, to provide in good time for their permanence, by guarding all the avenues to paradise against dangerous Intruders; and That with fuch care, that either the Serpent himself might have found no entrance there; or his Intrusion have only served to redouble the patriarch's wariness against his deceit. For-his reason improved by prudent enquity would naturally have fuggested to him, that where the guile of a ferpent had fomething to hope, human innocence must have every thing to fear. Thus our common Father, by discreetly tracing that single river's instructive career, might have acquired all the intellectual ideas of Good and Evil. which could any wife be necessary towards the enjoyment of his prosperous situation; and might have spared himself the fatal acquifition of that experimental knowledge, which he afterwards rashly purchased at so dear a rate, by eating the forbidden fruit.

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But Adam, I imagine, less earnest to examin the restless motion of that friendly current, than eager to enjoy the fruitful amenity of its peaceful banks, looked no farther than to the pleafing objects just before him. He felt himself happy for the time; and therefore, without giving himself any trouble to enquire whether or not there were any poffibility of his ever being otherwife, he supinely suffered the actual enjoyment of his then innocent pleasures to circumscribe his attention. Heavens! what a lamentable overfight! and yet what an important lesson does not this one incautious step exhibit, for Christians to learn wisdom by! For thus (we fee) it was that our unwary Forefathers laid themselves open to destruction, by rashly leaving to blind chance the firmness of those joys, which only circumspection and forecast could render permanent. And this in fact, oh mortals, is the fatal levity, which you are all extremely ready to reproach in Them: This the pernicious error, which you are all perpetually disposed to imitate them in : And therefore this is the ruinous rashness. I chiefly mean at prefent to caution you against. the encourage of his appropriate

REMEMBER then, my Friends, what I hinted to you at our first setting out. Though it be too sadly probable, that most of you have formerly forseited the spiritual paradise of your baptismal innocence; my C friendly

friendly wishes nevertheless incline the to hope, that ere this time, (that is, at least, in your Eafter-Communion) you have wifely given-back to God your penitential hearts, by a fincere conversion from your evil ways. If this then be really fo; from that auspicious instant a new paradise of grace and inward peace has been replanted in your breaks. If this be really fo; from that auspicious instant your heavenly Benefactor from his eternal place of pleasure (the abysis of his uncreated Love) has caused the life-giving stream, the holy Fear of himfelf to how afresh within your contrite fouls: that, watering again the christian virtues of his planting there, it may enable These to bring-forth abundant fruits of everlasting happiness.

AND here, by the bye, that no mistake or prejudice may obstruct your spiritual profit; observe withal, that, when I call the holy Fear of God A LIFE-GIVING STREAM, I am using no empty metaphor of human eloquence: no far-fetched or affected trope of enthusiastic, or fanatic Cant. In proof of which, read but the fourteenth chapter of the proverbs; and there you will find it to be the express language of the Holy Ghost himself:-The Fear of the Lord (fays he) is the fountain of life, to decline from the ruin of death. This holy Fear therefore is the mystic stream, the transient motion of whose fertil life-be-Howing

showing waters it behoves you all to watch and trace with prudent industry. This is must be your constant eare to follow closely till you discover perfectly those final important heads, to which its even course directs your present thoughts and meditations, namely, Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven, the four Last Things, you have to dread, or hope; and therefore the four grand objects, which deserve your first and chief attention.

WHAT though then (thanks to your present holy Fear of God) no longer conscious of wilfully harbouring vice or vicious yearnings in your breafts; you feel the love of virtue daily growing there, and daily shooting-forth fresh fruits of present peace, with blooming promises of future joy? Are you therefore to indulge, like Adam, a falle fecurity? No, my Friends; you must not after his example trust so blindly to your prefent state of virtue, as to look no farther. The improvement, nay the very preservation of your actual happiness depends upon your future vigilance. That you are in a state of spiritual safety now, is by no means a full fecurity for your always being so. In a state of mortality, the spiritual gifts of heaven and the christian virtues springing from them have this in common with vegetable nature, that they never can be at a stand, nor persist in one unvaried fituation. Like the plants of the earth.

earth; like the flowers of the field; their very Being depends on the inceffant growth of their substance, vigour and fragrancy: The moment they defift from encreasing, the date of their gradual diffolution commences: And though they do not always die away in the instant of ceasing to improve; they never fail to fall-back by hafty degrees towards their total decay. Therefore it is, that your almighty Father, on your feriously returning to him, throws open the flood-gates of his mercy, and causes the fountain of life, the holy Fear of himself, to flow in again upon your contrite hearts; that thus watered afresh and, as it were, fattened with a truly religious awe, they may bring-forth plenteous fruits of folid grace and everlasting glory. Ah! what more then can the Lord of Love on his part be expected to do to his vineyard than he already has done? And what less can be required on your parts, than affiduously to watch the progress of that divine and friendly current within you?

It is on the use or neglect of that enlivening stream that the permanence and encrease, or the instability and decay of your present grace depends. If (copying the supineness of your primitive parents) you suffer the Fear of God to pass unregarded; like them you will leave yourselves open to deception and ruin. For want of the ideas necessary to compare what you now are through

through the grace of God with what you may hereafter become through your own inadvertence; you must forcibly remain in a dangerous impotence of prudential forecast. So that, living as it were at a hazard, you will be liable at every instant to take superstition for faith; arrogance of spirit for christian hope; and sinful complacency for fraternal charity: ----Liable, I say, to take indolence of mind for contempt of the world; penury of foul for felf-denial; and want of common humanity for a perfection of godly zeal: And even liable to take prodigality for benevolence; rashness for fortitude; and pufillanimous meanness for religious humility. So likewise will you be constantly in danger of mistaking moroseness, disappointment, (perhaps) a surfeit of fin for cordial repentance; bigotry and fanaticism for religion and piety; the illusions of enthusiasm for facred inspiration; falshood for truth and vice for virtue. In short, without a strict unwearied attention to every impulse of the Fear of God within you, you will be eafily drawn into mistake meer hardness of heart for ferenity of conscience; to consider God's Commandments as pure inventions of human policy, and to impute his patience and long sufferance to divine inadvertence. And thus (alas!) intoxicated with a delufive felffufficiency, you will heedlessly fuffer that Fountain of life to dry up within you: The

The paradice of grace and inward peace now replanted in your hearts will again degenerate into a barren waste of lawless disorder, fruitful in nothing but the pernicious weeds of sin and sinful affections: And you will finally become deplorable victims of impious presumption, or of equally impious despair. Dreadful dilemma indeed! horrible catastrophe! And yet (miracles apart) such must be the fatal unavoidable consequences of not faithfully watching and closely following the facred current within

you of a holy Fear of God.

WHEREAS on the reverse, if with frequent ferious contemplation you pursue that bleffed stream down to the utmost limits of mortal happiness, the close of mortal life; you will find, that all beyond those limits is matter of the most reasonable apprehenfions: And you will find your apprehensions divided by four extensive heads of ulcful, though terrifying incitement to improve your religious Fear of God. Extensive Heads, I say again: For such indeed we may pronounce the Death, you are fure to encounter; though you know not when, or where, or how:—the Judgment, you are certain of being fummoned to; though uncertain with what fuccess:-the Hell. which may become your wretched lot; if, relying too much on your present security, you neglect to provide for your future fafety: - and the Heaven, which, though

it be prepared for you from the foundations of the world, may be for ever thut against you, through your neglect to im-prove the present graces bestowed upon you, by attending while on earth to the impulse and motions of that grand source of life, the Fear of God. These reflecting objects indeed, if duly minded, will abundantly enable you to view your present penitential state in its genuine light; that is, as a bleffing fcarcely more defireable than precarious: and will make you of course extremely jealous of losing it. These will be always prompting you to confider, that, as the Fear of the Lord on this fide the grave is, like a rapid flood, not to be enjoyed but by constant pursuit; so the peace of conscience it bestows is not to be preferved but by unwearied vigilance. These in a word will naturally remind you, that though you happily be for the present in a state of spiritual safety, you are not so immenfely remote from danger, but that there are still in being fins and finful occasions to allure you; an envious ferpent to beguile you, and innumerable evils every where furrounding you, and forever ready to fur-prife and overwhelm you, the very minute you lose fight of that fountain of life.

SUCH are some of the weighty truths you will draw from a diligent attention to your Last Things: Truths of the utmost importance to your eternal welfare: Truths which

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which will keep you always awake to your present dangers and by that means enable you to provide with success for your future unending fecurity. Hence it is that Ecclefiafticus fo confidently tells you :- Remember your Last Things, and you will never fin. And hence also the Lord again by the mouth of his prophet Isaiah says to every one of you, -When thou shalt pass through Waters, I will be with thee, and the floods shall not overwhelm thee, as if he had faid; -" if thou faithfully follow the enlivening " stream of a holy Fear and Reverence for " me thy divine Benefactor, and fuffer " That to lead thy contemplations through " the mystical Heads on which thy eternal " destiny depends; I thy Lord will be also " thy pilot and fafe-guard; and will enable " thee to navigate in spirit, and to sound " in good time, the aweful depths of those " important streams with such safety and " profit, that their several floods, instead " of overwhelming thee, shall contribute " to waft thee forward to the defireable port of endless rest and joy.

The whole earth besides lay groaning beneath the insupportable misery of a sevenyears famine, while Egypt alone enjoyed the most exuberant plenty: And the cause of this prodigious difference we find recorded in the forty first Chapter of Genesis as follows :- Pharaoh, the then reigning monarch of the Egyptians, lying once on a time wrapt-

wrapt-up in a nightly dream, fancied himfelf standing on the banks of the Nile: When behold! to his strayed imagination there appeared to rife out of the river feven fleshy and well-favoured kine; which were presently followed from out of the same flood, by feven others every one ill-favoured and meagre. And no fooner had the feven lean kine got clear of the stream, than, pursuing the fat ones along the neighbouring meadows, they swallowed these up. The corpulent cattle, we know, were a figurative warning of Providence to Pharaob of the redundant plenty, which the whole land of Egypt was to bring-forth without interruption during the feven next enfuing years: And the starveling animals, which purfued and eat them up, were meant to forebode the famine of equal duration, which was to tread on the heel of . that prosperous term; and which, if not prevented by feafonable industry, would not only devour all the fruits of that previous abundance, but prey on the very vitals of the land and its inhabitants; as a chain of succeeding events thereafter most effectually proved. But a proper and timely improvement of the falutary warning enabled the prince not only to fecure his people from the threatened fatality, but even to foften and relieve the diffreffes of his neighbouring states, during their feven year's. genegeneral famine, to the no small enrichment of his own. Thus much premised with regard to the matter of fact, let us proceed to the application of it, so far as it relates

to the subject we are upon.

CERTAIN it is, that next to inspiring heaven, it was to the divinely inspired Joseph's prophetical wisdom, that Pharaoh was indebted for the genuine interpretation of his mysterious dream. But it is not a jot less certain, that, for the substantial benefits he afterwards reaped from the same dream, he was also indebted to the previous diligence with which he procured that interpretation, and to the indefatigable vigilance and industry, with which he afterwards reduced it to practice. Had the monarch treated that provident warning with contempt, as a meer nightly fermentation of the brain; and careless of its meaning, proceeded no farther :- Or had he contented himself with admiring the fagacity of the interpretation; and, during the promifed feafon of luxuriant plenty, confined his whole attention to the quiet enjoyment of his then prefent power and affluence; of what use (I beseech you) would that septennial abundance have proved to him? Alas! it could only have ferved to redouble the after-diffress of a seven years dearth; and must have rendered the wretched contraft but the more insupportable to himself and

and his people. But the monarch was wifer. By the help of affiduous enquiry, he prudently traced the watry vision (if I may be allowed to call it fo) till he happily difcovered the feven diffressful Heads, to which its fleeting existence directed him: And thus, made wife by comparison, he feafonably improved prefent bleffings into effectual measures against future calamity. Of fuch importance it is in every fense, to look carefully forward! Of fuch importance it is in every state, to guard amidst present security against future danger! How much then (oh dear-loved Christians, whether in a state of innocence or a state of repentance!) must it not always behove you, to watch with an eye of the most circumspect jealousy against every the most distant danger of sin and sinful relapses?

Now nothing will more effectually preferve you from both, than the suffering your minds to be frequently carried away by the current of a holy Fear of God to the serious consideration of your Last Things. Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven are four abundant sources, every one able to supply that blessed Fountain of life, with plentiful rectuits of vigour and activity. By growing conversant with all four, you will quickly find how much and how justly your offended God is to be feared: how much and how greatly your divinely gracious and

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therefore jealous Benefactor deserves, not only to be reverenced but loved. So that your religious Fear of God, encreasing with the knowledge of those important Heads of christian meditation, will sweep all your affections into the abyss of his uncreated goodness. And thus the fame facred Fountain of life, by frequently returning in amorous fallies to its divine center; and, as it were refunding itself in that genuine place of pleafure, whence it first issued-forth, will as frequently flow back again with redoubled force into your grateful fouls in copious tides of augmented grace: verifying in a mystic sense those ever memorable words of Ecclefiastes: To the place, whence rivers issued-forth they return; that they may flow back again.

HERE then, revered Christians, let us pause for a while. The few hints I have already thrown-out, will, if properly weighed, suffise (I presume) to shew you the importance of endeavouring before all things to cultivate the perfect Fear of God within you by a serious and steady attention to the four alarming Heads into which that life-giving stream is now divided. Still for your Fear of the Lord to be truly filial and worthy of the breasts of Christians, you must strenuously guard against two pernicious Extremes, into which, without the greatest circumspection on your parts, it is

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liable to degenerate. To caution you therefore against those dangerous extremes will be the aim of my next discourse, with which I shall put an end to this Introduction.

In the mean time, thwart not, I conjure you, the gracious defigns of God upon you, by refifting the impulses of his grace, or flighting the riches of his mercy. Resist not against the face of the Mighty (as Ecclefiasticus says) nor strive against the stream of the river. No: rather wifely fuffer the gentle tide of God's holy fear to lead you forward to the frequent ferious contemplation of your final state. On that, henceforth, fix every day a few devout reflections. Each morning on rifing from your couch; each night on returning to it again, take a short but attentive view of your last important Concerns. By those henceforth direct your earthly course: forever mindful, that, to navigate with fafety through the tempestuous sea of mortality, you must cautiously steer with a steady unwearied attention to your Latter End. To conclude, my beloved Christians, with repeating once more the Holy-Ghoft's own language, Remember your Last Things, and you will never fin. Make it heneforth your constant favourite study to conclude well this perishable life; and you may confidently affure yourselves, that you will infallibly

Introduction.

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libly begin the next with the happy earnest, if not the immediate full possession,
of that substantial Bliss, which shall never
have an end; and you will eternally have
reason to-cry out, with the prophet:
Blessed is the man, to whom it is given to
have the Fear of God, Which, &c,

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THE STREAMS OF RELIGIOUS AWE.

SECOND INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

A river issued-out of the place of Pleasure, to water Paradice; which thence is divided into four Heads.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10.

WE have already feen, revered Auditors, that the mystical river here figuratively described is the religious Fear of God. And it is not to be doubted but that this fource of all wisdom, this fountain of life, is in itself a safe and gentle stream. What then? does it therefore exempt you from prudence and care? No, Christians. Safe and gentle as it is in itself; its borders, through the deprayity of human nature are beset with rocks and with shelves. Direct as its even progress is; it moves on between the dangerous Extremes of meer self-consulting apprehension, and heavendegrading mistrust. And therefore you cannot steer your spiritual course with too even a hand, nor proceed in your Fear of the Lord with too much circumfpection. To affift you to do which, I shall endeavour in this discourse to shew you the sovereign utility of revering our Almighty Benefactor and

and Parent with a truly filial Fear; and what that filial Fear confifts in.

And thou, great Author of all goodness, who deignest to regard and treat us as thy children, oh! help us to behave as such. Be thou henceforth the moving spring of all our souls affections: And so divest us of all selfish views, that, loving thee for thy blest sake alone, we may be sensible of no one dread so much as that of loving thee remissly.

For our Fear of the Lord to be perfect, revered Christians, it must be filial, and becoming the breasts of savoured grateful children towards their divine indulgent parent: And for it to be thus filial, it must be a Fear of God partly (if not more) because he is lovely, than because he is terrible: partly (if not more) through apprehension of losing him, than of forfeiting the pleasures inseparable from him: partly, in a word (if not more) through a generous abhorrence of giving him displeasure, than through a service dread of meeting his chastissements.

This is that genuine fountain of life, which will best enable us to decline from the ruin of death. This is the mystic river siguratively pointed-out in the words of my text: Which (issuing out of the uncreated place of pleasure, the abyss of divine bounty,

to water the paradife of faithful hearts; and reverting back to its parent (pring) has God for its origin and God for its end. This is the fertile fource, which, fattening your fouls with godlike virtues, will enable them to bring-forth the precious fruits of endless glory: And without which (to speak in the pfalmist's stile) they are in danger of remaining like a barren foil without any water. Laftly, This is the mysterious flood alluded to by the facred spouse of the Canticles; the copious tides whereof will overflow your hearts with true religious reverence towards your almighty maker, without damping your filial love of him; because impregnated with Charity's own heavenly warmth. And therefore (fays the divine Spouse) Many waters have not been able to extinguish Charity: And therefore (he adds) neither shall rivers overwhelm it. It is even fo, my Beloved. If you faithfully persevere during this mortal life in the generous middle Channel of a truly filial Fear of God, arifing from, or at least mingled with a filial love of him; its even tide will bear you strait and safe to the blissful Heaven of everlasting glory. It will enable you, not only to pass securely, in spirit, through the tremendous depths of death, judgment, bell, and beaven; but even to found and fathom them with so much courage, skill and fruit, that all their floods will have no power to damp your spirits, or

check your fervor in the paths of virtue, but on the contrary will add fuel to the ar-

dor of your christian piety.

WHEREAS on the reverse, however greatly you were to fear the Almighty, if all your fear of him confifted in nothing more than fuch a mere felf-pointed dread, as that you were deliberately indifferent about gaining or lofing him, and profesfedly careless of pleasing or displeasing him, so you might but escape his power and offend him with impunity; what I befeech ye were all your fears of God, but fordid shoals of self-intuition? what but the dregs of religious reverence? And what spiritual advantages could ye well expect from fuch defective groveling principles? Alas! I fear, that though they might, perhaps, serve at times as a degree of check to fome of your finful pursuits, they would prove but a feeble stay to you against vice in general, and would lead you but flow and faintly, if they led you at all, to the acquisition of genuine virtue.

It is certain indeed, that a felfish Fear of God is absolutely preferable to the want of all Fear of him; first, because it is possible that the most defective Fear may insensibly dispose the heart of a sinner to conceive in time a juster and more profitable one; and secondly, because if it do but restrain him from committing one single sin, or from adding one aggravating circumstance to his

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guilt; it ceases to be quite unprofitable. But then it behoves us withal to remember, that, there is a possibility at least, if not a great probability, that (instead of the heart being always disposed by mere servile Fear for conceiving a more just and generous awe of God) a foul that is fordid enough to fear its maker from no better a principle than a felfish slavish dread of him, may fometimes become gradually hardened by habit in fuch a gross and inordinate felfishness as shall finally destroy the very dread of its own producing. This in fact appears to have been the very case with unhappy Pharao: in whom the Fear of God, though at first it was manifestly real and great, being totally governed by an over-ruling regard for his own imaginary convenience, was fo far from ever changing for the better, that it constantly dwindled in proportion as the habit of felf-preference grew stronger upon him; and was thereby at length fo totally extinguished in him, that, after several times experiencing to his cost and trembling at the Almighty's power, he came to braving it in the end, and finally perished in the impious absurd. attempt to thwart God's declared refolution of fetting his people free. A lange to such to sad T as

NEITHER ought we by any means to forget, that such a servile awe of God on account of his eternal punishments, however permanent it should prove, will not suffise.

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to justify the finner, without being joined with a share of affectionate Fear of a Sepation from his divine Self, nor without being fanctified by the facramental grace of Penance: Which last condition is not always in the finner's power to apply, as our future Confiderations on death will clearly demon-Who then that feriously reflects on these alarming truths on one hand, and attentively contemplates on the other the effential awefulness of God's uncreated majesty, together with the unnumbered titles he has to all our filial reverence, can help confidering it as a dangerous extreme of rashness, for christians to trust their eternal falvation to fo feeble a stay as a meerly felfish Fear of God? who, but must see how much more fafe it is, and must be, to fanctify our Fear of the Almighty by making it filial, that is, by making our filial love of God one part of our motive, if not our only principle, of fearing him? For it will not, cannot be denied, that such a Motive is the likelieft, readieft means to render our religious awe acceptable to God, permanent, in itself, and profitable to us. And furely to neglect the most eligible means towards an end of fuch infinite importance as That of our eternal Salvation, cannot but be a dangerous extreme of temerity.

TAKE care then, dearly beloved Chriftians, that you do not, for want of circumspection, steer aside from the direct and - 00 - s e

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even course of a filial Fear of God to the precarious lurking shoal of meer felf-pointed apprehensions, more suitable to slavish, than to free-born, minds. Sound your own hearts then to the bottom, and found them often; that by a prudent constant vigilance you may prevent your giving into any dangerous mistakes. Examine every one of you the present state of your religious reverence for God; whether it be tending to perfection, or leaning towards approaching danger. Do you revere your heavenly author partly for his fake, or wholly for your own? Has filial affection for your fovereign Benefactor any share in your awe of him; or does that awe entirely proceed from fordid fentiments, which center all in

If on a serious search into the deep recesses of your souls, you find that the former is your happy case; take courage, Christians; and press forward in God's name. For you may be assured, that, while you saithfully persevere to cherish such a filial Fear within you, and daily study to improve it, you are in the genuine current that tends direct towards everlasting life. But if your case should chance to be the latter; haste, I entreat you, to gather in your sails; and altering your desective course, launch with noble resolution into the safer track of grateful reverence for God, seasoned at least with dutiful affection towards him, if not

intirely derived from it. Otherwise you run the risk of daily plunging deeper and deeper into a sordid principle of selfishness; —a dangerous Flat, without a certain, solid, settled bottom for Christian Hope to anchor in: A precarious situation, in a word, not a little resembling That, which the royal prophet of old seems to have complained of to the Almighty, when, in the bitterness of his spiritual anguish, he cried out:—I am stuck fast in the mire of the

deep, and there is no substance.

Now under God, revered Christians, it is on your own circumspection, that you must depend for all your safety against so hazardous an extreme. If through indolence of mind, or luke-warmness of heart, you leave your spiritual progress so far to blind chance, as to neglect the looking frequently into yourselves, enough to discover the true springs of your affections: where would the wonder be, that your filial Fear of God (for fuch I hope it is at prefent) should bye and bye degenerate into a fervile dread of him from wholly felfish motives? And should it (which gracious heaven avert!) ever fink to That ;-confidering the natural fatal propenfity of human nature to corruption and depravity, would there be no room in that case to apprehend, lest such a slavish dread might, in proportion as the habit of fordidness laid stronger hold on you, dwindle quite away, and leave your hearts, like that

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that of haples Pharao, so totally divested of all fear even of the Almighty's punishments, as finally to urge you, like him, to brave the very power you trembled at before?

However true then it be, that any Fear of God is preferable to none; it is at least incomparably fafer and therefore more prudent, dear Christians, to season your Fear of God with fuch a generofity of filial motives as may render it permanent and perfect, rather than to content yourselves with a defective, flavish, lifeless Fear, which very possibly may chance (for want of life and vigour to support it) gradually to die away within you, and leave your hearts in a fatal state of total abandon. For then (alas!) your condition might be justly compared to that of shipwrecked Mariners, who, in a foundering bark at fea, are thrown adrift upon fome fatal quick-fand: where no more able to advance or to retreat but as the billows drive, they are toffed and dashedabout (the wretched sport of winds and waves) till fwallowed-up at length by the relentless flood. A lamentable state indeed in every fense, but much more in a spiritual one. Take care then, Dearest Brethren, I conjure you, that you do not, through inattention, make that lamentable state your own; nor have cause to appropriate with literal truth those other words of holy David, so big with weighty meanmeaning, as well in a moral as an anagogic light:—I came into the depth of the sea, and

a form overwhelmed me.

In order therefore, my revered auditors, not to fuffer your Fear of God to be wholly governed by over-weaning principles of felfishness; be wife, and keep a perpetual watch over the emotions of your fouls; that all the motives of your reverence for God be seasoned with a portion of filial Affection derived from the just causes you have to love and honour him; namely, his own effential goodness and the infinity of your obligations to Him, as your all-gracious Father, Friend, and fovereign Good. And be affored that every Fear of God, that is void of love for him is dangerously defective. For (fays St. Augustin) " the Good, which is done " through Fear of punishment and not " through love of righteousness, is scarcely " as yet an effectual Good: Neither is that, " which feems performed in outward action, " therefore compleated in the Will; when " the man who does it would, if he might " with impunity, rather leave it undone."

PETER and Judas both stood in awe of Christ, even when they seemed the least to sear him. Both sinned against him: And both awed by conscious guilt, repented of their respective misseeds. Each then in repenting did what was absolutely good: But oh! stom how different motives! and with what

different success ! That Judas repented because he feared his injured Lord, is plain from his own words :- I have finned (fays. he) betraying innocent blood. But then he feared that Lord only from the same fordid motive for which he had wickedly betraved him, a base, misguided, over-ruling love of felf. And therefore his felfish fear lasted no longer, than to urge him to an unavailing restitution; and ended in the abominable fool-hardiness of enhancing his crime with fuicide. Conscious of his heinous falshood, he repented of it almost as soon as committed, not indeed on account of the injury done to Jesus, but of the evil to which he exposed himself: and such was the strength of his guilty Fear, that anxious to compound for his felony at the price of his ill-gotten pelf, he posted away to the temple, and restored to the Priests their iniquitous bribe. But as Self was still the sole moving spring of his conduct; so unstable and fruitless were his repentance and fear, that he no fooner quitted the temple, than instead of melting to generous compunction, he became hardened in desperate rashness; and bidding open defiance alike to God's mercy and vengeance, he boldly . wrought his own temporal and eternal destruction. Not such the case with generous Peter. It is true, that he also groffly injured Jesus, by the cowardly denial of him. But then fuch nevertheless had been the strength Diddit,

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Arength of his habitual affection for his injured Lord, that he no fooner recollected this ingratitude to that best of masters, than reviving love awakened in him all his former reverence. He wept and wailed his infidelity; and forafmuch as the fource of his repentance was not fo much the dread of feeling the weight of Christ's displeasure, as the apprehension of losing Christ himself, his filial fear and penitential grief were lasting as his life. In short his fear of Jesus was the effect of his Love for Jesus: and therefore it was nothing strange, that fo holy an awe should daily improve in him, as we know it did, till it urged him to facrifice his very blood to purchase an eternal union with the Lord he loved fo well.

HENCE, my beloved Friends, you cannot help perceiving, how much it behoves you to avoid the hazardous shallow of a meer felfish Fear of God. Make it therefore, I conjure you, your constant study to guard your hearts with filial principles of Awe. But then while you labour to arm your Fear of God against utter Selfishness; fee, that you do not launch into an other Extreme of equal danger: I mean a dastardly injurious dread of him. Revere the Lord chiefly for his own fake; and revere him like what he is, the God of clemency and justice: But suffer not your awe of him ever to transform him in your minds to what he never can be, an unrelenting tyrant. To be plain,

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plain, guard your religious reverence of him from every mixture of fanatic horror. Fear him with respectful yearnings of loving children; not with the mistrustful quakings of disaffected slaves. Otherwise instead of persevering to love and honour him as your divinely indulgent parent, you may infenfibly come to abhor and degrade him as a pitiless task-master. And thus while you avoid the Charybdis, the fordid flat of meerly selfish Fear of God, you may unwarily split on the Scylla, the dangerous rock of liftless Self-dejection. Which, if it do not at length precipitate you into down right hatred of your divine Benefactor, may plunge you at least into a disponding indifference for him; and by locking-up all the faculties of your fouls in a spiritless unactive difmay, may rob you of the power as well as of the inclination to please him.

Or this we have a remarkable instance in the royal prophet. While David considered the Almighty as his offended Creator and only contemplated God's power, truth and justice as ready to reck vengeance on his guilty head, the dejected monarch lay in a manner crushed beneath the unweildy weight of his own horror. His strength and his courage forsook him; his slesh withered off his bones; his senses losed all their exertion; and his very soul was convulsed to a lifeless compound of dismay and

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impotence, fuch as will be best described in the prophet's own words: There is no bealth in my flesh, says he, in fight of thy wrath: my bones bave no peace in fight of my fins: like an unweildy burden they are become too beavy for me: I am grown miserable and bent down: my heart is disturbed within me: my strength has for saken me: and the very light of mine eyes is no longer with me. It is hardly possible for the mind of man to figure to itself a more distressful complication of woes than David here enumerates as effects of his spiritual dread. Terrible effects indeed of a misconducted Fear of God!-That the prophet at this juncture had a real Fear of Lord, is a felf evident truth, which interdicts all power of doubt. But oh my friends, what kind of fear was this? Does it appear to have been such a fiducial Fear as an all-gracious God and parent has a right to expect from his grateful creatures, his fondled children? or to judge by appearances, did it not rather favour of that mistrustful kind of dread, which is the usual tribute of disgusted slaves to an unpracticable tyrant? Where then is the room to wonder, that fuch, as David describes, should be the oppressive effects of an awe so grossly injurious to the sovereign source of goodness?

However the royal prophet himself soon repaired his injurious error. For once he recollected the tender mercy of his heaven70

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ly Creator; he presently tempered his inordinate dread of the aweful rigorous Judge with a proper filial confidence in the compaffionate Redeemer; and from that happy minute he became a new creature. His courage revived, and brought with it the return of his vigour : his foul and his fenfes (to use his own stile) being renewed in the marrow and fatness of comfortable hopes, re-assumed all their functions; and his dejection fubfiding, made way for that heroic intrepidity, which the genuine filial Fear of God never fails to excite: - The Lord, he cries, is our refuge and strength: therefore will we not fear, even when the earth (ball be overturned, and the very mountains (ball be thrown into the heart of the fea. And so far was he thenceforth from seeking a refuge from the presence of God: so far from any longer crying-out as before, - oh! whither shall I retreat from thy Spirit? and whither shall I flee from before thy face? that in extales of amorous confidence he cries-out in the midst of real danger : ----Lord! - thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living - thy good spirit will lead me into the right way: for thy name's fake, ob Lord thou wilt quicken me in thy equity: and in thy mercy thou wilt destroy my enemies. Well and no aid on

SEE then, revered Auditors, that in following the facred current of a religious Fear of God, you carefully keep clear of

all dangerous extremes. Trust not to your own merits, or strength; nor doubt of his goodness and help. Fear the Lord above all other Beings: fear him all the days of your life; and fear him chiefly for his own fake: But then always mingle you filial Fear of his divine displeasure with a filial trust in his paternal Love. As often as you revolve in mind the justice of your all-knowing Judge, take care to recollect also the clemency of your all-bounteous Redeemer, This, Christians, is a caution I mean to give you as of inexpreffible advantage to your eternal welfare. For I would fain have you take particular notice and bear constantly in mind, that the Fear of God, which is mingled with confidence in him, gives courage and vigour: Whereas the dread of him, that is blended with mistrust of his clemency, dispirits and enervates every faculty of the Soul. Of this we have an incontestable proof out of St. Matthew.

THREE Servants were intrusted with their master's effects to improve them to the best advantage during his absence. Two of them in fact, conscious of the justice and goodness of their generous master, were faithful to their trust. They knew, that he would have just cause to be displeased, if contrary to his orders, they ungratefully neglected to improve the substance he confided to their care: But then they considered also, that a master, who had the generosity

to trust them without his having any need for fo doing, would have the goodness to add every help they might want and to make allowance for their involuntary mistakes. Encouraged therefore by their fiducial reverence, animated by this mixture of Fear and confidence, they went to work with fo much spirit, activeness and success, that, at his return they were in a condition to restore him his deposit redoubled. Accordingly they not only received the approbation and applause of their bountiful Lord, but were profusely rewarded by him with the honour and advantage of sharing in his fupreme felicity. - Well fare thee, good and trufty fervant, he cries to each of them: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will appoint thee over many: enter into the joy of thy Lord. On the contrary, the third Servant ungratefully overlooking all the motives of confidence, which the already experienced Bounty of his master afforded him, delivered himself wholly up to the most abject gloom. And as if he had to do, rather with an untractable tyrant, than with an indulgent Superior, he injuriously conceived such a mistrust of his Lord and fuch a cowardly dread of the punishment he himself might incur, if his efforts should miscarry, as could not fail to cause that miscarriage he so idly apprehended; by their robbing him of the vigour, as well as of the inclination, to aim at the faithful difdischarge of his duty. So that, instead of endeavouring to improve the little intrusted to his care, he buried the whole in a fruit-less inaction, and thereby drew upon himfelf his gracious master's just indignation, and was deservedly cast-out into utter darkness; there to bewail with weeping and gnashing of the teeth, and there to learn when too late, the extreme folly, iniquity and ruin of not mingling the awe of his gracious lord with a just considence in his ex-

perienced Goodness: were to sloutges bas

LET this then serve you as a Lesson, revered Christians, never to part the Saviour from the Sovereign, in your thoughts; and never fo totally to dwell on the feverity of your offended God as to lose fight for one fingle instant of the boundless mercy of your indulgent Parent. By this means your filial Fear of God will prompt you to love him with a daily encrease of fervour becoming grateful Children: And your filial Love, by every day exciting you still more and more to shun every distant occasion of offending him afresh, will improve in you that fiducial Awe which belongs to you as repenting finners. Or rather your Love and your Fear of God becoming one undistinguished principle, will jointly enable you to carry to the throne of mercy a godly confidence mixt with religious reverence, For the remembrance of your past fins will only make you the more earnest to improve your prefent

Tent repentance: And your repentance will not only sweeten to you the Thought of your Last Things, but will make you delight in the frequent recollection of them, as the effectual means to preserve you from vice and to maintain you in possession of the filial Fear of God and of the paradise of inward peace inseparable from it:—Remember your Last Things (says the prophet) and you

will never fin.

To conclude, my Beloved, if carefully shunning the dangerous extremes of felfish expectation and injurious mistrust, you faithfully keep in the strait and even channel of filial Fear of God, equally wide of prefumption and despair; you will certain-ly perform your mortal voyage with safety and profit: And your spiritual navigation will happily end in the harbour of unbounded Joys. For that genuine Fountain of life will lead you on to a perfect discovery of the four mystic heads into which its falutary stream is now divided. It will fully lay open to your view the spacious wombs of Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven: Wherein you will behold all which nature and grace have of terrible, or consoling. And though their feveral prospects may at first somewhat alarm you; still the more you furvey them, the less you will have cause to dread them. Rather the affection and reverence for God, the hatred for fin, and the

the love of virtue, they will excite in your fouls, will gradually dispose you for beholding them at length, if not with sensitive joy, at least with spiritual serenity. So that conscious of loving God and confident of being loved by him, you will eye Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven with religious awe, but with no flavish horrors. On the reverse, growing familiar with Death, you will regard it in its true light, as a fafe and defirable anchorage for the just from fin and danger: And instead of trembling at its approach, you will often with St. Paul be prompted to cry-out :- ab! who will deliver me from this mortal body? The frequent recollection of your final Judgment will prepare you to look on it as your triumph; and therefore to court your merciful Judge's approach in the words of the Pfalmist :- Arise, ob Lord, and judge my cause. Considering Heaven as your primitive birth-right, your eagerness to possess it will frequently impel you to figh after it with holy fob, and to fay within yourfelves :- ab! when shall I come and appear before the face of my God? Nay Hell itself (by unfolding to you the immensity of horrors, which the grace of repentance has rescued you from) shall contribute to fill your souls with fresh recruits of vigour, and excite you to break-out with David into frequent fervent acts of thanksgiving to your

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your divine deliverer. Yes, you will often cry: Great is thy mercy, oh Lord, who hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Thus the frequent remembrance of your Last Things, by gradually deadening within you every vice and vicious inclination, will furnish your filial Fear of God with abundant vigour to flow back again into the Abyss of heavenly Love, that genuine place of pleasure, whence it first sallied-forth: That, returning in a redoubled stream, it may refresh the spiritual paradise of your religious hearts with new and copious recruits of grace and inward peace; and thus render them, according to Isaiah's words, like a well-watered garden, with springs which shall never dry-up: Which I beg God of his infinite mercy to grant you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoft. AMEN.



Second Direction.

your divine deliverer Ven 5 in will of ten sty: Great in the service of Lord. who had delivered my feet from the breek

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CONTRADICTION.

IN Two DISCOURSES ON DEATH.

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FIRST DISCOURSE.

A river issued-out of the place of pleafure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the name of the first is Pison.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10.

Christians; as we have already seen: Four are the capital allegorical Streams to which one mystic river directs us. That is to say, the Fear of the Lord, that genuine fountain of life (sent forth from the eternal place of pleasure the abyss of God's uncreated Love, to water the spiritual paradise of our heart and enrich it with solid virtues) invites us while on earth to sollow its gentle progress down to the ultimate borders of mortality; there to contemplate the four Last Things which nearly concern usuall.

all. It leads us to divide our attention now into fuccessive considerations of those final events, which are to part and determine the irrevocable fate of human individuals bereafter: That thus we may become able to escape, by looking forward, those manifold evils, which otherwise it may one day be full late to elude by looking back. Accordingly (fays my text) a river iffued-out of the place of pleasure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four heads. After having then in the two foregoing discourses navigated in spirit, and (I hope) with advantage, the single river of religious Awe; we shall henceforth consider it as dividing itself into the four tremendous heads of Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven. our succeeding reflections therefore it will behove us to found These in their several turns with the greatest attention: That, by becoming acquainted with the dangers we have to encounter at our embarking in any one of the four, we may fet out with fuch caution and proceed with fuch skill as will enable us to bring our spiritual navigation to a prosperous issue. Now the first of these heads is the river Death: an aweful flood indeed! Such as all our affiduity to the end of our lives will but barely fuffice to prepare us for launching into with some prospect of fafety. And the name of the first (fays my text) is Pison. THE

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THE Hebrew word PISON indifferently fignifies an extension of mouth, or a multitude, or a doubling, or a change. And all these Meanings are strictly applicable to Death. Yes: extensive indeed is the mouth of death: for it takes-in all human nature. So great is the multitude of openings to its devouring maw, that though all men must pass through it, few or none ever enter it by the felf-same passage. It doubles down the leaf of mortal existence so effectually, that it puts an ultimate period to all accompts between man and his Creator: Infomuch that, where the tree falls, there it must lie: that is to say, Once a man is embarked in death, on whichever fide the balance lies, whether of grace or of guilt, by That he must abide. And finally it is an effential property of death to work an unreverfible change in all mankind. For it is a vast impetuous flood, with two opposite currents; one of which wasts the happy few, who launch into it prepared by a timely circumspection, from transient mifery to everlasting happiness. The other whirls the wretched many, who raihly plunge into it without precaution, from fleeting, false, unsatisfying joys to endless, real, unutterable woes. In short it is an affemblage of the mystic waters of contradiction: Waters, which meeting no where, rapidly roll on in separate tides either to everlasting comfort, or else to never-ceasing dedesolation. Such is the foremost of the four important heads we have to fathom:

And the name of the first is Pison, otherwise DEATH.

IT is plain then, beloved Christians, that the flood of death must needs be of a very dangerous nature to embark in, fince it runs fuch different ways and tends to fuch opposite extremes. Surely then the certainty, that you must all launch into it sooner or later, and the possibility of your then falling into the wrong current of the two, must be sufficient motives, if you have any thought at all, to keep your prudence in one constant alarm. Why then should I (merely to follow the beaten track of custom) labour to pervert your just apprehen-fions of death into needless horrors of it; by painting death to you in colours not its own, though they be often given to it, I know not to what useful purpose? Let others figure death to you like a deffected skeleton holding-out in one hand the emblematic glass, to warn you (with its leffening fand) how foon you may expect its Summon; and in the other, the fatal scythe already on the fweep to mow you down. But to what use? for this is not death. Or let them describe its grim approaches in fainting, clay-cold fweats; in parting, convulfive yawns; in foul-fick agonies and all the bitter conflicts, which usually arrend the

feparation of those twin-born friends, the spirit and the flesh. Yet, to what end? for still no part of this is Death. All this indeed may fright your feeble fenses, embitter life, and bring you to flart at the very name of Death; but the whole (I fear) will contribute little towards your preparation for it. For again I say: All this is no part of Death. Or if it be so; I see nothing in it all, worthy to shake the courage of a man of any fense and spirit. For all this the Good experience in common with the Wicked; and yet enjoy amidst it all a perfect sweet ferenity, which evil men are strangers to. The righteous man (fays the prophet) though he be overtaken by death, is still in refresh-ment. Yes, Christians, he is so: and it is only the nation of the wicked, whose end is bitterness, as the same facred writer tells us. Let the wicked therefore tremble alone at the approach of Death: And they indeed can never quake too much; because Death in fact will prove to them a source of every forrow; a total bar to all repentance; and a fure current to eternal ruin, if entered into unawares and unpreparedly.

In vain do habitual finners, who daringly put-off their reformation to that critical period, flatter themselves with the design of doing penance in their latter end. True it is, that then they will stand in the greatest need of penance. But then (alas!) they

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will probably have no gleam of hope to egg them on, no word of comfort to buoy them up in that last day of trial. Here it is then, Christians, that you may find abundant matter for difmay. And here I own lies all the cause for dread which I am able to conceive in the thought of Death. The only terrifying circumstance, methinks, which attends on its approach, is the danger to which Ill-livers expose themselves of launching into it unprepared. So that on viewing Death fairly, we shall find it rather of an inviting, than of a forbidding aspect. For on one hand, the righteous without it could never obtain the fweet rewards of a well-spent life: And on the other, that Death is ever terrible to meet, it is the habitual finner's own fault; whose perverse neglect of a timely preparation for his latter end, is the fource of all the evils he has to dread beyond the grave. Upon the whole then it is certain, as I hope to make appear in this and my next discourse, that Death indeed is a just cause of terror to the wicked, but matter of triumph to the righteous: Because in Death habitual unprepared finners will want the Will to repent; or having the Will, they will probably be disappointed of the means: Whereas the righteous in Death will put an end to all their fears, to commence a life of everlasting joys.

On God of goodness, whose weighty truths. I am about to unfold! grant to my words the power of persuasion; and give to all thy servants the gift of understanding; That by wisely preparing in time for a prosperous voyage to eternity and by being-always ready to embark in Death, we may, instead of trembling at its aweful prospect, know how to chuse its friendly current and launch into it with chearfulness and safety,

ewell field regulates accomion that the two DEATH then, revered Christians, must needs be an object of infinite concern to us all, fince it is one and indeed the first of the four grand Heads, on which the eternal happiness or misery of all mankind depends. Sure we are, that we must all embark in its aweful flood fooner, or later: And we are no less sure, that we can embark in it but once. It is certain then of course, that whenever that once shall arrive, we must forcibly fet out unprovided with practical skill. Now it is the universal sentiment of the wife and experienced, that to fucceed in any difficult and hazardous Enterprise, there is always need of a great deal of vigourof spirits, dexterity, forecast and industry; especially if, being our first essay of the kind, we engage in it unawares and without any previous trial. What mariner in his fenses, however brave, could forbear to H 2

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tremble, was he compelled to take upon him the steerage of a ship and to venture out to fea without bodily ftrength; without rigging, compass, or rudder; and without any skill in the art of navigation? Can it then be prudent in us, to venture on fo dangerous an enterprise as the voyage of Death, without the least previous preparation? Can we discreetly engage on a sudden in an undertaking we are so absolutely ignorant of? and rashly launch into that aweful flood with less precaution, than we usually do into the bosom of sleep? Lefs, I fay again: for even to make fure of fleep (though encouraged to it by nature and tutored in it by custom) we still think it necessary to make use of some daily forecast; fuch as (for instance) the smoothing our couch, the adjusting our pillow, and the removal as far as practicable of every foreign obstacle to a calm repose. Shall then the great business of Death alone appear to us too trivial an affair to require any prepara-tion at all?—Why! to judge by common practice one would really think fo. For it is a melancholy fact too notorious to be denied, that the bulk of mankind live in as thoughtless an indifference about their dissolution, as if it were no more difficult to feal-up the wicked life of an habitual finner with a godly departure, than it generally is to close-up the eyes of a wearied labourer with undisturbed slumbers; -nay as if amidst

amidst all the gayeties (and even amidst the routs the riots and licentious wantenness) of a dissolute world, it were full as easy to die the death of the righteous, as amidst all the retirement and self-denial of the most circumspect servants of Christ. But oh the deluded mortals, says the Lord by the mouth of Moses his servant!—oh that they were wife! oh that they understood and would provide for their latter end!

For a wicked man to entertain any hopes of dying well, he must certainly depend upon dying in his bed, in the midft of his friends, and with all the spiritual fuccours at hand, which can help him to feal his peace with his offended maker. He must never reflect on the numberless, violent, unforeseen accidents, which may fuddenly fnatch him off the stage of life at fea, on a common, in the very streets, or perhaps in some remote part of the world, of the town, nay even of his own house, without an aid, or living witness to his exit. He must totally forget the domestic fatalities of instantaneous madness, palfy, lethargy, or apoplexy; the foreign flaughters casually affected by sudden overturns, or falls; by lightnings, inundations, tempefts, earthquakes, fire, or the crush of ruins; by the erring thot, the lurking dagger, or the empoisoned draught, which may furprize him, without the least defign of others

others or his own. And yet any one of these may as probably fall to his lot, as it has fallen to the lot of thousands, nay of millions before him, who expected it as little (till it did happen) as he actually does. For there is absolutely nothing so certain upon earth, as the uncertainty, which mortals are always in, of the place where, the manner bow, and the time when they are to die. And none have fo much reason to expect a hasty summon of one of these kinds as the habitual wicked-liver. For (besides that, as Fob and the plalmist testify, one of the temporal curses entailed on the wicked in general is, that they shall not live-out one balf their days) even the less than balf of their natural time, which they are allowed to spin-out, will probably expire when finners least expect its expiration. Nor does the wife-man make any exception, when speaking of the evil-liver he says, that his calamity shall come unawares; he shall be suddenly broken without remedy. In short, as the inspired David assures us, the Death of the wicked is extremely wretched; and the eyes of the Lord are upon them, who do evil, to destroy their very memory from the earth, Go then habitual finner and trust to a death-bed repentance,

But to come closer to the point, let me for a few minutes suppose, that (in virtue of some wonderous privilege hitherto unknown)

known) the daring finner be exempt from all the aforenamed sudden plunges into Death; and that, by evident but slow approaches, it forewarn him to make ready. What then? Is he a jot the surer, that in such case he will have the will to improve that warning and set about the weighty business of a cordial repentance? or that, having the will, he may depend upon the means? Alas! too probably will such a one, at such a juncture, be disappointed of the one, or the other; if not perhaps of both.

IF the first symptoms of every mortal difease discovered to a sickening sinner, its last fatal mischiefs; there might be hopes of bringing him to prepare for a penitential departure. Bur mortal diftempers of the lingering kind are for the most part like faithless servants, whose gradual domestic larcenies work the furer destruction to the master, for being unsuspected. The first deceit, which is apt to baffle a wasting finner out of all thoughts of compunction, is generally speaking an idle expectation of foon regaining his health : And he commonly lends a readier ear to That; than to the fincerer voice of decaying nature. To strengthen the dangerous illusion, there ufually comes-in the flattery of nurses, fervants and attendants, backed by the various branches of the faculty and the favage ten-

tenderness of senseless friends and kindred all combining to lull into dreams of certain recovery the already too unwary patient; whom they rather ought to awaken to the nearness of his dissolution. Horrible tenderness! which no less fatally than litterally verifies the prophet's words:-the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. For afterall, what cruelty can come up to That of Chriftians, in this particular? But Christians did I fay! rather I should have called them infidels. Wretches fo wonderously tender, that they cannot bear forfooth, that a neighbour, friend, or kinfman (though known perhaps to have lived a life of heinous fin) should pass a few uneasy hours before his Death in the important work of reconciliation with his offended God : and yet fo incredibly barbarous, that they can look-on with cool impiety, and fuffer him, for want of fome preparation to fink into a reftless maffer, for being runn woeded. Thytinrate

Upon the whole, it is really shocking (and perhaps the most shocking circum-stance attending the charitable office of visiting the sick) to behold with what tame barbarity the dying are commonly kept in utter ignorance of the danger they are in though themselves principally concerned therein. It is no ways strange therefore, that habitual sinners should so often, as they are, be disappointed in sickness of the lei-

fure they expected for repentance. For what can be naturally expected from fuch perversity, but what mostly happens; namely, that the ailing finner, thus shamefully betrayed during a whole redious illness into a kind of daring fecurity by attendants, doctors, pretended friends and felflove, will then only begin to think of death when already perhaps in his last vain struggles against its impetuous stream? Judge you then, Christians, if in those last distressful moments of the wicked man's expiring efforts, when Death is actually overwhelming him, amidst a tempest of tumultuous thoughts all jointly pouring-in upon him; -tormenting thoughts, I fay, of the fubstance he is quitting; of the fondled pleafures that are quitting him; of the children, the wife, and other tender names, he is forced to part with; of the grace he has forfeited; of the crimes he has committed; of the heaven he despairs of, and the hell he expects:-judge you, I fay, if amidst such a wreck of body and hurricane of mind, the dying finner is likely to fix all his affections where alone they ought to be fixed,-on his all-bounteous God.

A horrible tempest once arose in the sea, and the outrageous billows obedient to their angry creator's just resentment lashed with resentless fury the little vessel, in which the prophet Jonah was contumaciously sleeing from

from the Almighty's command: Yet Jonab lay all the while stupidly indulging his senses in indolent flumbers. However the frighted failors sensible of their danger opposed for a while all their labour and skill to the impending destruction. But finding at length that their efforts were likely to fail, true failor-like, they thought at last of heaven, and betook them to prayer as to their ultimate means of fafety: When looking afide, they beheld their heedless passenger Jonah stretched-out on the deck in all the tranquility of unruffled fleep. Aftonished therefore at the unexpected fight, they awoke him with a shout of surprise, and invited him to join in their pious attempt. Thoughtless stranger! (they probably cried) what means the deadly weight that thus locks-up thy fenses at a time, when most thou standest in need of them? Look round and view the deadly ruin which every instant threatens to absorb us all: why art thou opprest with Sleep?—arise! invoke thy God, if perchance he will think of us and we perish not. Now what effect, think you Christians, had this alarming speech upon drowning Jonah? what answer would you have expected him to give? I dare fay, a very different one from that, which he really did give.- " alas, cries the infenfible " mortal! It is for me, that this mighty " tempest is come upon you."-Stupendous infa-

fatuation! for thee, oh Jonab? can'st thou be conscious of this and still keep dosing on? ah! fo much the less did it behove thee to indulge this rash, this fatal supinenefs. So much the rather Thou shouldest have been the first to try to appeale thy offended Lord with prayer. " But no (me-" thinks, the stubborn fugitive replies) it is " all in vain. With me it is now no more " a time for praying but for drowning. " E'en leave me therefore to my wretched " lot; and know, that the furest way for " yourselves to escape from your present dan-" ger, is to escape from me. With speed then " confult your own fecurity, and throw me " into the sea" Oh Jonah I Jonah I throw thee into the sea, sayest thou?—What! rather drown than return to God? Had it not been wifer to improve this timely warning towards averting thy maker's wrath by thy prompt amendment? Ah yes! It would have been more fafe as well as prudent to persuade those yeilding, half converted pagans to change their course and steer for Ninive, whither the interests of heaven called thee. What strange perversity could urge thee then to dally thus with thy impending ruin ?-But wherefore do I ask ?-The reason is self-evident. Excessive as the disorder was among the jarring Elements on this occasion; far greater still was the diforder in the rebellious heart of Jonab. I 2 And And therefore it is not amazing, that all the emotions of 'Jonah's Will, at that feeming point of Death, were nothing better than a wretched mixture of impotence and rashness. Learn then from hence, oh Christians, what is like to be their fate, who presumptuously trust to the very hazardous

event of a death-bed repentance.

Bur there is really no need of recurring to Jonah for an instance of the fatality almost inseparable from such a presumption, while our own age affords us fo many. Attend but the fick-bed of almost any dying libertine of your acquaintance through all the stages of his ailment: and it is a million to one but you find there another drowning Jonah, as indolent, as obstinate, as pervetle as the former. Whether in the fummer of manhood, or in the winter of old age; let the storm of a mortal disease gather over an habitual finner and burfting upon him threaten his earthly frame with destruction: And how is he apt to behave from the beginning to the end of it !- how !why supinely indulging a shameful security in the midst of his distress, he foolishly buoys himself up from day to day with idle expectations of foon being better; and builds his airy hopes on the supposed skill of his doctors, on the studied flattery of his pretended friends and on the concurring affurances from all around him, that his beA. pre-

prefent diforder is a meer passing hurricane, which he will infallibly weather. Meantime the feventh, the ninth, the fourteenth, the one and twentieth days (every one of which was to bring the promised favourable crifis all pass in their several turns, and passito no purpose il For lo ! at length a croud of deathful fymtoms break-out upon him altogether, and force him in spite of flattery to awake to his impending diffolution.-And then indeed (oh then!) the common cry is :-- " quickly, quickly let a " divine be fent for." That is to fay, if even then it be not thought, both by patient and franders-bye, of primary importance to confult the man of law about Temporals. However we will suppose that finally a minister of God arrives; And startled at the too glaring proofs of mortal agony in every feature of the dying finner, " awake, be cries, unfeafonably doing Christian! shake-off " this lethargy of foul, which lulls thee to " perdition. Alas my friend! thou art tottering on the margin of mortality: " thou art on the very brink of that imperu-" ous flood, which, if it do not land thee " fafe on thore in the realms of endless " fafety, will dash thee a wretched wreck " on the coasts of everlasting misery. Look " therefore I conjure thee, ere thou take " the irrevocable leap; and wifely employ the minutes left thee, towards purchai-"ing counce

ing a happy eternity." Now what thoughts do you conceive the most likely to ruth into the mind of an expiring finner at the found of fuch quickening truths? You will expect them perhaps to be thoughts prompted by a filial fear of God feafoned with penitential hope; thoughts, in a word, big with contrition, love and confidence. Ah! would they always (nay often) were fuch! whereas (alas!) in those alarming straits how generally are not the thoughts of the dying libertine mere thoughts of desperation?—On a fick bed, at the point of Death, at the close of the heavens, when (as the Lord fays by the prophet's mouth) defruction will pour-in upon the wicked like a florm, how many Jonabs are there not?fractory preacher, whose minds dwell more on the wreck than on the thore? more on God the exasperated Judge, to despair of his . mercy; than on God the tender Parent, to appeale his angent and recall his love?

REPENT ANCE in death then, revered Christians, is not so easy a task as giddy worldlings affect to suppose it. It is not so easy for a dying libertine to hate in an instant the vices he has a long habit of loving. The bare forms of penance will not suffice to make a saint of a sinner. No. It is very possible for a man to die by choice on a bed of straw, wrapt-up in haircloth, sur-

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rounded with clergy, supplied with every foiritual aid; with the word of God in his cars, with the name of God on his lips; nay, with the facramented blood of God in his bosom; and yet to be for ever loft. For a finner to become a fincere penitent, he must turn from bis evil ways; he must return to the Lord with all his beart : he must detest vice with all his spirit, and love and embrace virtue with his whole foul: And all this not barely out of flavish self-interest; but partly at least out of grateful love of God, and filial fear of losing Him, as well as of losing the joys effentially centered in him. But where is the probability, that a fordid creature long enured to ferve the interests, prides and lusts of the earth, like a flave, shall all on a sudden shake-off the familiar yoke and cherish in an instant quite opposite sentiments? --- Sentiments often difficult even to those who have spent their whole lives in a continued effay of them ?-What !- shall a libertine wax old in vice and during health hold his honour, his conscience, his God of no weight; when put in the balance against one of his disorderly appetites ? Shall no remonstrance of masters, rulers, parents or friends; no advice of God's gospels and ministers; and no ftings of remorfe have power to draw him back one step from his beloved precipice? - And shall such a one, after trifling

trifling with the leifurely warning of a lingering fickness, be still supposed likely to change fentiments and conduct in his lateft instants, the busiest instants of his whole mortal life? - Shall fuch a one, in four and twenty hours (perhaps) of incessant interruptions, distractions, anxieties and pains; - in four and twenty hours wretchedly distributed between divines, physicians, lawyers, kindred and pretended friends; with a body on the rack, and a foul in all the hurry of a person who hastes to quit a house that is actually falling about his ears: - Thall fuch a person (I say) at fuch a time and in fuch perplexing circumstances be supposed in a condition to make with eafe, or indeed to make at all, the heroic effort of fpringing at one leap out of the current of perdition into the fream of falvation?-out of the mire of fin and prefumption into the limpid waters of God's holy love and fear ?-in a word, out of the jaws of hell into the arms of Jesus? To fum-up all in a still narrower compass. shall a man, who has difregarded God during the best part of his life, for the sake of making false gods of his appetites, be supposed just at the point of death (when able no longer to act or to think with any vigour) to be nevertheless so vigorous as to rule his unruly passions and bring them under perfect subjection to his reason, for the

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the pure love of that divine Being, he has been to tong accustomed no flighters Can vius oh Christians, be weak enough to think this leafy, or even probable. On the reverse, methicks, ever fordinde ferious reflection on what I have here already afferted on this head must abundandy suffice up convince you, that though it be absolutely possible fas what is not to the efficacy of God's preventing grace i) it is highly inprobable, that an habitual finner, who takes no thought to provide for this latter end, hould close a wicked dife with a godly death. riditiope, however, to put whis out of all dispute, before I dismiss the prefent subject. But that I may not keep your attention too long upon the stretch, I shall remit the farther consideration of it to the next discourse.

MEAN time, I befeech you, Christians, think seriously and often on what I have said. And fince it is neither safe nor prudent to trust your eternal destiny to the improbable event of a death-bed reformation; wisely be beforehand with time, and live in a constant preparation for eternity. Frequently remember your last things, and you will never sin. The constant reslection, that you must embark you know not how soon in the aweful slood of Death, cannot said to improve the holy fear of God within K

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you. And that facred stream, after watering and enriching the spiritual paradise of your pious hearts with daily fresh supplies of grace, will slow back with all your affections into the abyss of uncreated love. It is true, the unflattering reflection may possibly depress you with sadness for a time. But then your forrow in the end will be turned into joy; and your fear into endless safety; when, borne by it to those realms of boundless bliss for which you were created, you shall happily experience the truth of the prophet's words: Death is swallowed-up in victory. Which, &c.

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Many time. I beleach you, Christians, think ferroutly with the company of the com

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CONTRADICTION.

SECOND DISCOURSE UPON DEATH.

A river issued-out of the place of pleasure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the name of the first is Pison.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10.

N the foregoing Discourse, revered Christians, the fountain of life, the filial fear of God, affifted our contemplative minds to begin their spiritual voyage through the aweful flood of Death; a flood equally difficult and hazardous to navigate, as well on account of its two-fold current of contradictory waters, the one tending to eternal happiness, the other to eternal misery; as because we can embark in that flood but once, and then of course without experience. From what we have feen of it then, it already appears, that the whole of our fafety in Death must depend on the good K 2

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good or bad state we are in, when we embark in it. If it be our good fortune at that critical period, to be previously stored with a sufficient stock of christian virtues; we can have no room to doubt of fuecess. But if then, when there will be no more time for providing, we should unhappily have all our provision to make; we must confequently have every evil to dread, and every reason for dreading it. For Death is a just terror to the unprepared finner; and matter of triumph only to the righteous: Because (as I have partly shewn and shall now finish to demonstrate) in Death the Former will want the will to repent; or having the will, he will most probably not have the means: whereas the Latter will put an end to all his feats with a life of endless joys.

Thou then oh Lord, our fafe and only Guide! vouchfafe to point us out our way. Give us to love and fear thee, while we have life and health: That, whatever fickness or disaster overtake us, we may be always ready for the approach of Death; and perfectly prepared to turn our backs with chearfulness on this perfidious world, to haste to thy divine embraces.

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Nor to mention the numberless fatalities, which frequently hurry finners into another world in the bloom of life and when they least expect it, even those wicked livers, who enjoy the unmerited privi-lege of dying in their beds and as it were step by step, are for the most part so ex-tremely taken-up in time of sickness, that they feldom find time to repent. In fickness they have their pains to attend to, their doctors to confult, their medicines to take and their rest to procure: They have also their conforts, their children, or other fondled names to confole and be comforted by; their temporal concerns to settle; their lawyers to instruct; their domestics to direct; and meffages to receive and return. In fhort what with cares, infirmities, physicians, friends and visits from abroad, or follicitudes at home; they are feldom (unless in a slumber) either alone or at rest. Where then on a death bed is the time for repentance? But granting them at certain intervals to be left to themselves, free from company, pains, or disturbance: still how few of those intervals are filled with aught befide courting or indulging fleep? or even fuppofing that neither was the cafe: ah! what can it avail the fick finner, that his mind be free and broad awake, while his conscience is fulled in a dream of speedy recovery? Alas I gulled by that airy expecta-

tion it is ten to one but the deluded wretch. instead of employing his precious minutes of ease and liberty in the weighty business of repentance, wastes them only in forming idle schemes how to make his passions amends bye and bye, for the indulgence he is forced to refuse them at present. It is not amazing then, that, amidst so many obstructions to repentance, the unprepared finner throughout a long fickness should neither find time, nor the will to repent; no, nor once think of death till, like an overwhelming tempest, it be just on the point to destroy him. It is no wonder (I say) that fuch a one, like a drowning Jonah, should rashly dream-on in the height of his danger; or that, when forced at length to awake to his impending diffolution, he should be unable to think of aught to the purpose, and think rather of the wreck than of the shore; more of God the offended Judge to despair of his mercy, than of God the tender Parent to appeale his Justice?

IT is plain then, revered auditors, that repentance in death is far from being so eafy or common, as the giddy world imagines it. Indeed did the conversion of a sinner depend on no more than a meer outward form; and could the sinner command the prerogative of not quitting the sless without timely notice, and of quitting it then as it were at his leisure; there would be scarce

an event upon earth more familiar and eafy, than a death-bed repentance. Towards making fure of That, he would have little more to do, than to cloath himfelf a few minutes before his departure in fackcloth and aftes without the least inward changes or (which is easier still) to crave mercy of God with the lips without withing at heart to fatisfy his justice; to receive his holy facraments without faith or devotion; and thus, when capable no longer of acting the reprobate, to become all at once (by playing the hypocrite) a penitent faint without virtue or grace; nay perhaps (according to the commodious doctrine of modern Casuists) without other title than the negative one, of not blashheming his maker. And even as things are, what is more common with worldlings than to dream of such death-bed Conversions?

Is some notorious adulterer, extortioner, drunkard, or other wicked liver of your acquaintance seized with a mortal disease? While he continues to breathe, if you knock from time to time at his door, to enquire how he sares; you may be almost sure of being successively answered by the family,—be is ill:—he is worse to be is extremely bady—be is going and almost at the last extremity:—till at length you are mysteriously told,—thank God! be is much better—But on asking again, if he is recovered enough to see

company, the mystery is cleared up with a, No; be is gone to beaven :- (that is to fay in the cant-phrase of presumptuous worldlings) be is dead .- Now were these Words to be taken by the letter; what righteous man would not be apt to cry-out in a rapture of joy and furprise :- "What! " fuch a libertine gone at last to heaven? oh "the miraculous power of grace l doubt-" less then he gave the strongest marks of se cordial contrition; laboured during his " fickness in fighing for his fins; bathed bis " couch by day (like the royal penitent) and " watered his bed by night with his tears of " compunction; doubtless he broke intirely " with vice and vicious occasions; and ap-" plying his utmost efforts to redress the " private wrongs he had done, he publicly er repaired also the public scandal he had given." But, not at all. On the reverse we shall find upon enquiry, that all his marks of repentance amounted to this :- perhaps la few hours before his decease, he received (God knows how!) the holy communion: Perhaps he only cried in his dying minutes, Lord I have mercy on me . Nay perhaps he did neither; but barely forbore (and That not till speechles) to storm and to swear; to quarrel with his Creator and worry all about him. However, the had the are to elude the laws of men, while able to violate those of God: And though he lived per-000

peradventure like Judas, he expired not like Judas, but died in his bed. And That forfooth is generally speaking more than sufficient with the thoughtless bulk of modern Christians to dispatch the most licentious of sinners from his Death-bed di-

rectly to heaven.

Bur ah deluded mortals! be advised by Saint Paul and cease to deceive yourselves, or to fuffer the infatuated world to deceive you. Beware of mistakes: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers—nor mi-fers—nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor any other wicked livers, without a total change of heart and a cordial return to God before death, shall at any time after Death possess the kingdom of God. Indeed there is no sinner upon earth, however grievous be his crimes, but may in his last moments sue to God for forgiveness, and find God disposed to forgive him. But then to obtain that forgiveness, he still must turn from his evil ways and return to God with all his heart. For God has the right to expect, and would not be the per-fect Being he is, if he did not expect, that the finner who was the first to wage war, be ready at least to second his gracious in-vitations to peace; — that he be at least as eager to attone for his fins, as he was to commit them; — and that, after forfaking his divine Benefactor with all his beart, also with all his beart he return to him again.

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On these conditions only it is that any attention is due to that popular phrase, so pious when rightly understood, and yet so often impioufly misconstrued by presumptuous Worldlings,-" Between the stirrop " and the ground, mercy I craved and " mercy found." On these conditions, and only on these, it is true, that the most wicked of livers may at his last gasp hope for and obtain the pardon of his offended God. But alas! who can avoid feeing the almost impossibility, that a dying finner, at that bufy juncture should have the prefence of mind, the Will, or the means to apply these conditions. Conditions nevertheless essentially requisite to make a penitent of a finner, as Moses observed to the rebellious Israelites and in them to every other finner :- If thou wilt feek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him .- For our Lord will return to rejoice over thee in all the riches of his mercy, as be rejoiced over thy fathers: -yet so (that is to say, on these conditions and not otherwise) that thou hear the inviting voice of the Lord thy God, -and return to the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy foul. Since then it is thus plain, that the conversion of a sinner indispensably requires in him an inward contrition of heart, an utter detestation of fin, a total reformation of fentiments and affections, and an entire return of the whole

foul to God; it is the groffest of absurdities to suppose, that a creature, whom no warnings from earth or heaven can prevail upon to renounce the life of a reprobate while he is in health, shall at the point of Death (when in a state of imbecillity) have the vigour to shake-off his attachment to vice and acquire a perfect love and fear of that God whom he has fo long fet at defiance. Whoever is infatuated enough to think thus,—whoever is abandoned enough to imagine, that heaven may be purchased so cheaply, or that God may be thus fafely offended and eafily pacified, must necessarily harbour the meanest, most injurious ideas of both.

" BUT No (cry licentious Worldlings in " their usual cant) Far be it from us, to " think meanly of heaven or its almighty " Author. God, we know is too just to " forgive unrepenting finners. But then " he is also too good to reject any who en-" deavour to deserve his forgiveness. The " Libertine then, who goes not to work " till the eleventh hour, may stand as fair " a chance, as they who began their labour " early in the morning. For Libertines in " general are men of spirit: And a man of " fpirit never loses entirely the mastery over " himself. So that once he resolves on a " change of life, he is fure to effect it with " vigour and success: Because the later he goes L 2

" goes to work , the more in earnest he is, " when about it." But hold! For all this to be true; it must also be true, that men of spirit are always sure both of power to resolve and of time to fulfil whatever they resolve on : Else in what consists their mastery over themselves? Now sad experience proves, that it is not fo. Tell me, oh evillivers! During the years you have lavished in the pursuit of vice, have your reason and conscience never repreached you with ensaving them to those passions they had a right to controul? Let them but freely speak, and they will remind you of the many reproachful checks they have given They will remind you, how often you. you resolved on a change of life, and as often broke through your resolutions. Either then (oh Libertines!) You are not the men of spirit you deem yourselves; or it is false that "men of spirit never lose en-" tirely the mastery over themselves." What meer mortal ever had more spirit than Solomon: And yet with all his spirit, he losed that mastery so totally, that all his inspired knowledge sufficed not to keep him Ready to his God, nor to recall him from his evil courfes. Infomuch that, though Solomon has left us upon facred record ample proofs, of how abject a flave to vice and madness a man of spirit of the worldly order may become; still with all his spirit he

he has left us fo few and feeble marks of his felf-mastery, that it remains a melancholy doubt among divines, whether he be saved or not; and stands an uncomfortable proof of this important truth, that men of the greatest spirit may through their own perversity utterly lose the mastery over themselves.

STILL You perhaps (oh Libertines!) fuppose it will be time enough to think of repenting and becoming righteous, when no longer able to enjoy the being wicked. But ah! you will then find to your forrow, that beginning to repent only when forced to leave-off finning, is but commencing a repentance without end. For where is the common fense in presuming that the turbulent environs of death are a proper space for fo rude a combat as That of a finner with his disorderly appetites? Let me for a minute suppose a no-wise impossible case,that any one of you fall fick on a sudden; and after a-while your physician say honestly to you,—" Alas my friend! it were " cruel to deceive you. I have done my " utmost to conquer your disease; but all to " little purpose. Let me advise you there-" fore, as a Christian, to resign yourself " with chearfulness to God, and (with-" out thinking more of this life) to make a " speedy serious preparation for a better, " For to be plain with you, you have

"not many hours to live." — What think you? — Would such a speech, however kindly meant and gently uttered, put new resolution, life and spirits into you? ah! too often have I been a sad spectator of the contrary. From woeful ocular experience I can myself attest, that the like friendly admonitions are mostly apt to throw expiring sinners into such confusion, that the warmest efforts of every Christian round them can scarce prevail upon them to turn their feeble thoughts towards their eternal

sovereign Good.

SACRED ministers of God, whose holy function calls you to affift the fick! how do I pity your painful disappointment in many a vain attempt to fave the drowning finner! The more you try to wean his affections from the world, the more shall he fondle the beloved idol in his breast. While you esiay to raise his groveling thoughts to heaven, his little hope of That, but finks his reptile wishes to the earth? What plank of fafety then shall you exhort him to feize upon? To bid him cling to God's unbounded mercy, is only perhaps galling his conscience with an unrelenting sense of what he has constantly abused: And but to name almighty Justice, shall peradventure throw him into convultions of despair. Thus vain (too generally speaking) are all your efforts to restore to the wicked-liver on his Deathbed

bed the gifts of grace and peace. For (woe's my heart !) what grace or peace can find its way to a disordered breast, where all is guilt, despondency and tumult? Still you approach his pillow and cry-out: ---"Courage, my friend! Cling close to God " your Saviour. Think on the death and " ignominy he endured for you. Know " that if Judas had but availed himself of those; even Judas had been saved. Re-" pent then fincerely and call on your Re-" deemer for pity and forgiveness; and "You may still be faved."-But ah too unsuccessful pastors! how often have you not the grief to find your zeal produce but little fruit! Yet who can wonder at This, when you are feldom called to the wasting finner till lo! the hour of Death is come; the night of mortal life: That Night in which no man can work, fays Christ: a Night, in which the prefumptuous finner, who rashly puts off his reformation till then, will probably have no light to work by, nor eyes to fee his certain means of fafety; nor heart to turn his thoughts to the fufferings of his generous Redeemer; or if he looks on them, will eye them only with a glance of terror. With the side said berelo

The divine Jesus when seen in the day-time was wont to attract the hearts of all who beheld with candour the awful sweetness of his aspect. But viewed in the night he

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fcattered consternation around him. The fame Jews, who by day pressed upon him in Ferusalem with eager Hosannabs, on meeting him at night in the garden of olives were ftruck with difmay and fell flat on the ground. So too his own disciples experienced by day a pleasure in gazing on him, fo much superior to all earthly delights, that rather than part with it they professed themselves ready to follow him to prison and death. Whereas the once he approached them on the face of the deep In the dead of the night, behold! all his charms were transformed in their eyes to an object of terror, which convuling their hearts with a panic, urged them to shriekout :- a phantom ! a phantom ! Oh lovely loving Jesus then! If Thou, in whose death and paffion all our hopes are lodged; Thou whose mercy is our only buoy of safety;if Thou (I fay) appearest to the unprepared finner amidst his dying struggles an object of difmay; ah! whither shall he turn in fearch of fafety?-Unhappy creature! too certainly he must be lost, and (oh the horrid ruin!) loft for ever.

But has not the Almighty solemnly declared that he wills not the death of a sinner; but rather that he be converted and live? And does not Ezekiel tell us in his name, that in whatsoever day the wicked shall be converted from his wickedness, it shall not hurt

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bim? If then the evil-liver repent of his fins on the very day of his Death, may in the very last hour; will he not, in virtue of God's promise, be still intitled to pardon and mercy? Doubtless he will. But ah! the business is for him to be converted then. And what reasonable hope can a daring finher form to himself, that on the margin of Death, in the night of mortality, he shall have the power to embrace that conversion, which he ungratefully and rashly declined during the sunshine of health? For though God have graciously promised pardon to the finher in whattoever day he shall truely repent; he has no-where promifed him the leifure or grace of repentance in any hour, to which he shall prefumptuously dare to put it off.

A hundred years God allowed to the finful Cotemporaries of Noah for the work of repentance. Repentance, oh Sinners! cried the Patriarch, while building the Ark: And the numberless resounding strokes of his hammer during that whole century were so many repeated Summonses for that perverse generation to repent. But alas! instead of employing that precious time in the weighty business of repentance, they madly perverted it into fresh leisure for sinning on. And therefore in the end (when in all probability they earnestly wished for a space to repent in) they had no more the time for repenting. While the

Ark was in hand and they might have fecured a refuge therein, they had not the will so to do. And therefore it was just, that when the Ark was in readiness, they should neither have time nor power to enter it, though possess of the will. You then, oh presumptuous libertines! learn wisdom at their cost, and cease to flatter yourselves, that, spite of all your actual guilt, you shall close your unchristian lives with a christian departure. Remember rather, as your Saviour warns you, that Death, like a thief in the night, will steal upon you unawares, if you prepare not out of hand for its approach. Yes, as Ifaiab fays, it will pour-in upon you, like an impetuous torrent driven by the spirit of the Lord; and he will then probably execute on obstinate Christians his terrible menace to the contumacious Jews: -When I am gone, you will feek me; and (unable to find me) you shall die in your fin.

"WHAT! (Jays the libertine) Surely God did not place us in this world, to damn us in the next? His chief delight is in his Clemency; and his mercies are above all his works. To God then will belong the care so to touch our hearts in the end, as that we may redeem the time we have lost." It is true (oh sinners!) that God did not place you on earth to transmit you to hell: But neither did he place

place you here to fet heaven at defiance. He made not his kingdom for infidels: but neither does he reserve it for profligate Christians. God is all Clemency, it is certain: Yet all his Clemency restrains not his Justice from daily plunging wicked livers into everlasting fire. "Will it then (do " you presume to say?) belong to God to to touch your hearts in Death with repent-" ing grace?" Ah! who can hear fuch rash impiety and not be seized with horror? Now that God lays open all the treasures of his mercy to allure you to a change of heart and affords you the leifure to effect it, neither his promises nor threats can move you. What prospect is there then, that in the painful busy hour of Death your hearts will be more pliant? Which of you all will after this discourse set seriously about a total change of manners? will break with vice and mend your life for good? If then you do not love and fear the Lord enough to do thus much at present, while in health and ease; what room is there to expect, that he will have greater weight with you bereafter, on the flippery brink of your diffolution? Nothing but madness or impiety can prompt you to such an expectation. It requires a long habit of skill and experience to tread with safety on a narrow and dangerous steep. And therefore we see, that they who are unaccustomed to the hazards of a M 2 pre-

precipice, feldom are rath enough to venture on its brow without meeting their Thus it exactly happens for the most part on the borders of Death. However pleasing a prospect that aweful flood affords to the provident Christian, whom a long practice of serious contemplation has familiarised to it; the horrors it discovers to an unprepared finner, who rushes on it unconcerned, are more likely to turn his brain, than to quicken his thoughts and strengthen his courage. There then the unpractifed unprepared finner of course must have every cause of just terror and dismay. cause there (as I first said and have fince made appear) he will want the will to re-pent, when most in need of it; or having the will, he will most probably not have the means.

SUCH (oh revered Christians!) is the foremost of the sour mighty heads, which are to-close-up man's mortal existence; and which the single stream of a filial sear of God leads us to contemplate: That remembering our Last Things, we may never sin. Such is the vast impetuous flood made-up of the waters of contradiction: a two-fold mystic current, tending in two opposite tides; the one to everlasting misery; the other to never-ending happiness, as we soon shall see. And the Name of this first is Pison, in other language Death,

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This it is (adds the facred Historian) that encompasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold: And the gold of that land is good : There also is Bdellium and the Onyxtione. For the comprehension of which, and to flew you how perfectly the literal and mystic senses of this passage agree with our present subject, I have four things to observe to you.—First, the Hebrew word Havilah equally fignifies what is full of pain, and what is fruitful and bringing-forth : And therefore it is a proper and genuine figure of Eternity, that unmeasurable space, the vast extent of which takes-in two separate states; the one abounding with excels of pain, the other fruitful in and perpetually bringing forth substantial pleasures.-Secondly, Gold is a natural emblem of grace and glory. Wherefore in the Revelations of St. John, the Holy Ghost fays to the Laodicean Angel : - I advise thee to buy of me Gold, that has been tried in the fire, that thou mayest become rich indeed. Thirdly. the aromatic Gum called Bdellium, somewhat bitter to the tafte, but fragrant to the fense of smelling, is not unlike to myrrh in this, that it is a lively fymbol of christian innocence; which in this life is often fo embittered to its possessors, that with the spouse of the Canticles they may truly say of God, My Beloved is a bundle of myrrb to me. And yet in another life they will one day

day have cause to cry-out in raptures of joy with the same holy spouse, — when I opened to my beloved, my singers were dripping sweet-scented myrrh: So fragrant in another world will be the fruits of their virtuous struggles in this! — Lastly, the choice oriental onyx, a precious stone of a candid hue with here and there a contrasting cloud, is a striking type of truly repenting sinners; whose timely cordial conversion, restoring them to the candour of piety, sets-off that piety with the heightening shades of compunction.

Thus much then presupposed, you see, Christians, that the river here literally called Pison is a natural figure of the mystic flood of Death: Which encompassing the figurative Havilab, Eternity, will one day bear you to the endless pains or joys of that unbounded continent. For all who once embark in Death, must debark on one or the other of those extensive shores. Woe then to the wicked-liver, who plunges into it unprepared! how will not He have cause to curse his former rashness, when he shall find himself a wretched wreck toffed on the coast of everlasting misery! where (as holy Tob fays) bis eyes Thall behold his own destruction; where, though wickedness be now so fweet to his palate, the food in his bowels will be turned to gall! How will he foam with despair, when fleeing from the iron weapon, the bow of fleel shall pour its arrows upon him! when

when the heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him, to crush him with the weight of God's fury!

Horrible consequences of dying unprepared!

desperate voyage of presumptuous sinners, who think no caution needful for launching into Death! And yet This (says the Prophet) is the portion of the wicked from God; and the inheritance appointed for him

by the Lord.

Not fuch the portion of the truly virtuous. No: They, secured by conscious grace, shall view the stream of Death without terror and embark in it with confidence to be transported by its gentlest cur-rent to endless peace and joy. For, says the facred writer, though their decease be deemed an affliction, and in the eyes of men they seem to suffer; they are in peace: they Shall be at rest: they shall live forever : And their recompense shall be with the Lord their God. Taught by the frequent recollection of their Last Things to prefer the salutary current of virtue to the ruinous eddy of vice, they shall launce into this foremost flood of eternity with calmness and success; and their spiritual navigation conducted with fafety under the guidance of grace shall bring their frail Vessels to the harbour of substantial peace freighted with the precious fruits of a good life, and lodge them forever in the kingdom of everlafting blifs. There they

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will be rich indeed: for the gold of that land is superlatively good. There the precious bdellium of innocence, and the comely onyx of repentance will yield them their fill of true wealth and delight. There in short they will abound with the my sic gold and gems and spices of glory love and joy: And (to speak in the stile of Ecclesiassicus) their immortal souls will glow and shine and spread a fragrancy around the throne of God like fire and incense in the censer; while their incorruptible Frames glitter also with unclouded brightness like chosen vessels of beaten gold set with all manner of precious stones.

You see then, revered auditors, that the stood of Death is a true mystic assemblage of the waters of contradiction: a mysterious stood, which rapidly rolls-on in separate currents; the one of sweet, the other of bitter waters. Yes, sweeter than any honey the Good will find the stream of Death, which is to bear them to eternal bliss: For (says the psalmist) the stream of that river shall rejoice the city of God. Whereas no wormwood is so bitter as Death will make the current of perdition to unrepenting sinners in their latter end. For then (says the Lord) I will give the wicked the water of gall to drink.

On one hand therefore, how bleffed is not the innocent man, who never walking in the council of the ungodly, nor treading

in the path of finners, is always preparing for his diffolution ! For He (fays the plalmift) shall be as a tree that is planted by the water fide, that bringeth-forth fruit in its feafon. How bleffed too is the penitent finner, who is mindful of Death, to fin no more, and mindful of his past transgressions, to efface them by mingling (like holy David) his very drink with his compunctive tears ! For He also shall find in the friendly current of Death the fweets of those mystic waters, which the divine Jesus so graciously proffered to the contrite Samaritan, and which he still reserves for every contrite heart: And they shall flow therein and be (fays Christ) as a Well springing-up unto life evering define . And the faithful remen. gailale

wretched will not those wicked livers be, who drinking-down iniquity like water, while they have life and health, prepare, not for their dissolution till it comes upon them! For then alas! (unwilling, or unable in all probability, to do penance) they will be reduced to cry-out, as Jeremiub says,—" oh hapless we! God bath put us to silence: He hath given us indeed the water of gall to drink; because we have

" finned against bim." w

Tr can forely then no longer be doubted, that Death is a just Cause of terror to the wicked: Since in death the unprepared

finner will want the will to repent; or having the will, is most likely not to have the means? It is furely above the reach of doubt, that Death is a real matter of triumph to the provident righteous : Since in Death These will put an end to all their fears, to commence a life of everlasting joys? Be wife then, Christians, and prepare in time for the important voyage through the stream of Death: That by a provident industry, you may make fure of a prosperous voyage to eternity in the current of the righteous. Let therefore the filial fear of God prompt you to a frequent serious contemplation of your Last Things, those aweful Heads which are to decide your everlafting deftiny; And the faithful remembrance of them will leave you nothing to dread from the bitter waters of the wicked. Remember your Last Things, and you will never fin. Remember, that it is very certain, that you must die, and no less certain, that you can die but once. Yet where, or how, or when you are to die is quite uncertain. It may (for aught you know) happen this year, this day, this very hour. Should you (which gracious heaven avert!) be taken-off in a few instants; you would not be the first by millions, who have died in the infant when they least expected it. The very last Person, who suddenly expired, thought probably as little of his approaching Death .

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Death in the preceding minute, as you now think of dying shortly. And yet he really did die; and died quite unawares: perhaps too, unprepared — And so (alast) may you do; unless from this instant you provide against so dreadful an event, by an immediate serious conversion of your hearts to God.

BE then, oh Christians the fruit of this discourse and the preceding one, an affiduous recollection of the truths therein contained. And reflect, I conjure you, every day and every hour, that That may be your laft. Each morning, when you awake, reflect, that your next fleep may be perpetual; and spend the ensuing day, as if you knew it would be so in fact. Each night, before you close your eyes to sleep, reflect, that you may possibly never more awake but to eternity: And make such acts as you would wish to do upon your dying bolster. Thus will you always be prepared for Death: And thus prepared you can have nought to fear from its approach. For by these prudent means the Waters of Death will supply with fresh vigour the facred source within you of filial fear of God: And that bleffed stream (after duly watering the spiritual paradise of your converted hearts and rendering it fruitful in every christian virtue) will flow-back again with all your affections into the abyss of God's divine love, that N 2 eter-

nal place of pleasure whence it finst iffued forth: Whence it will again overflow your fouls with fanctifying grace and joy, and veoffenthe facred Preacher's mysterious words: Rivers return to the Sea, whence they come, that they may flow-back again. Sweet

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By then, ob Christians the fruit of this differentle and the preceding one, an affiduous recollection of the truth a therein contained. And reflect, I conjure your every day and every hour, that That may be your laft. Bach morning, when you awake, refledt, that your sout fleep may be perpended. and spend the ensuing day, as if you knew it would be so in fact fraction night, before your close your res to like, restock, that you may possibly never more awake but to eternity: And make the days as you would with to do upon your ing boliter. Thus will you always be prepared for Death: And thus propined you can have mought to fear from its approach. For by thefe prudent means the Waters of Death will supply with feelh vigour the facred fource within you of filial fear of God: And that Meffed fiream (after duly watering the fpultual paying in fruitful in every christian virtue) will flow back again with it radife of your converted hearts, and renderiaro the abyte of God's divine love, that -1013

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A river iffued-out of the place of pleaof fire to water paradife; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the name of the second is Gihon evoded in

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firained by God's irrevocable fummons to LREADY, my revered Christians, we have passed in spirit the grand barrier of mortality. Already the fountain of life, the fear of the Lord (iffued-forth from the cremal place of pleafure the abys of his uncreated love) has in the two last difcourfes led our contemplating minds through the aweful flood of death, the first of the four mighty beads, which are destined to help that facred ftream to water the fpiritual paradife of every faithful christian heart with frequent fresh supplies of persevering grace. The truths I there unfolded to you have not (I prefume) been loft upon you! Raz fight derive its Source but from the indig-

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ther (I hope) they have made too deep an impression on your minds, not to rouze you to a steady resolution of living for the future with unwearied circumfeection and in a constant Look out after your final disolution. And indeed, my beloved, it is of the greatest importance for you to make fure of thus much. For it is absolutely on the measures we take towards a prosperous or untoward navigation through the channel of deathy that we must depend for the good or bad success of our unavoidable passage through the tremenduous river Judgment, the second in order of the four great rivers of eternity, which it behoves us all to fathom (and That with the greatest attention) before we be constrained by God's irrevocable summons to embark in it for good : - And the name of the second river (fays my text) is Gibarrier of mortality. Already the four non

THERE are two different meanings in the Hebrew word, Gibon. It fignifies impetuous, and it fignifies a-breaft: And both these fenses belong to the stream of man's final Judgment. How truly impetuous a stream it is, we find in the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the prophet says: ——I beheld till the thrones were placed, and the Antient of days took his seat ——And behold a fiery impetuous flood came-forth from before him. Now whence could this impetuous flood derive its Source but from the indignant

nant breast of that insulted Majesty divine, which has long fince threatened the unrepenting wicked with its vehemence? A fire (fays the Lord) is kindled in my anger; and I will pour-forth my wrath upon them like water. Such, my friends, is the fecond of the four important heads, on which our evernal deftiny depends: And the name of this fecond river (fays Mofes) is Gihon, that is

(mystically speaking) JUDGMENT.

FROM the river death to the river Judgment the distance is so very little, that the transition is momentary. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye, the former disembogues into the latter. Both have This in common, that all men must embark in them sooner or later; none can embark in them more than once, nor draw back again once they are embarked. Both too are alike in This, that each has its twofold current: one to lead the righteous to endless joys; the other to drive the wicked to unending mifery. There is however fome difference between them, and it is, that death is a mysterious assemblage of the waters of contradiction: whereas the Judgment which follows it is a mystical collection of the figurative waters of Restitution.

IT was prefigured in the holy but bitter waters of jealoufy mentioned in the fifth chapter of the book of Numbers. Such was the effect of those waters, that, when given

given to drink to a married woman fuspected of conjugal infidelity, they became to her if innocent an immediate bleffing, a fource of fruitfulness, and an ample justification of her wronged virtue. But if the was guilty; they became a malediction within her, and burfting her afunder revenged the violated honour of her injured husband. Thus in like manner, but with a more tremendous rigour, the flood of Judgment will decide between the jealous God of hofts and his faithful or unfaithful spouses, the souls of men; when These shall be made to drink of its bitter waters. For, bitter as they are by nature, they will prove a very bleffing to the Upright and credit their fidelity by caufing Them to abound with the precious fruits of endless bliss. Whereas the Wicked will find them a bitter draught indeed, which shall burst Them asunder with rage and despair. Once more I repeat then and shall fully demonstrate in the course of my two next discourses, that the final Judgment of finners is a tremendous flood of restitution. For it will restore to the Good the peace and good name which the wicked are wont to rob them of in this world : -It will restore to the wicked themselves the just fear they have loft of their offended God: And it will restore to God's justice the reputation, which his long fufferance has leffened in the esteem of the Unrighteous. novin

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On God, our Judge and Saviour! spite of all our past ingratitude, vouchfafe to be our Saviour still; and so resresh from time to time our silial fear of thee with persevering grace, that wisely prepared, by a life of steady penance, for embarking in the rapid flood of final restitution, its bitter waters may become a stream of blessings to us, and fit us for considently beholding thee in the quality of Judge.

So THEN, revered christians, the stream of God's final Judgment, bitter as its waters are, shall sweeten in the end all the present fufferings of his faithful fervants; by restoring to them that peace and honour, which the malice of evil-minded men robs them of in this life? Yes, it shall fo. For it will be as a purifying hyffop, to cleanse them from every foreign filth thrown at them: It will shew them in all their native candour, and re-instate them in the full postfession of their every native right, thus verifying the words of the plalmift :- Unto thee, ob Lord, belongeth mercy; because thou wilt render to every man according to his works. In John William

But for this confoling certainty the righteous would want the courage and strength to bear-up under the unweildy weight of injurious insults, which their fairest virtues are often apt to draw upon them

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them from bad men. For it too frequently happens, that the very deeds on which they reasonably build their solidest hopes of salvation, are by the malice of the wicked perverted into arguments of capital reproach, and with a kind of infernal magic are metamorphofed into matter wherewith to defame and oppress them. In short, if truth be not less truth for being dreffed in metaphor; we may truly fay, that the malignity of evil-minded men with regard to the upright of heart, is a kind of rod of enchantment of a far more mischievous nature than all the pretended magic wands of witches and forcerers. Bad men feldom practife even virtuous deeds but from fome vicious motive or other: And therefore are they fo ready to rate the most laudable actions of others by the reprobate propenfity of their own corrupt hearts. On this principle therefore they dare to imitate the foothfayers of Egypt by mimicking the very miracles of a Moses; and may often be said to out-do them with too faral fuccefs. Infomuch that what pagan superstition heretofore dreamed about forcerers bringing the moon to the earth, we without dreaming may affert to have been exceeded by the wicked in the very Person of Christ our heavenly master. For oh my divine Redeemer! Thou fovereign Luminary of all perfection! to what an abject state of humiliation

ation did not human malice drag-down thee thyself? Ah Goodness ineffable! It lowered thee indeed. Not from thy heaven tog the earth: For in That thy mercy was beforehand with it, by stooping thyself the first. But alas! from the state of sovereign honour, to which thy marvellous life and doctrines entitled thee, the malignity of hypocrites debased thee to the lowest pitch of infamy and scandal in the opinion of the giddy unreflecting world; and made thee, as thy prophet had foretold, the reproach of men and the scandal of the populace. In fact, fays the Evangelist, speaking of our injured Lord, there was great murmuring in the multitude about him. For some said, be is good: And others faid not; but be feduceth the people. One time he was decried for an impostor; another time for a tool of Satan: Here he is abused as a sabbath-breaker; there as a companion of profligates: Now he is treated as an ideot, and then as one poffest of a demon, and in the name of Beelze bub the prince of devils casting out devils. The short (as Isaiab foretold and St. Mark and St. Luke bear witness) be was reckoned among profligates. Nor was there scarce a hateful shape to which the hypocritical magic of evil-minded men did not transform that facred Pattern of all fanctity in the conceit of the deluded vulgar. a beliefen has night glunderers of the helph is criphan and af-

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WHERE then is the wonder, revered Christians, that the very best Actions of his faithful, but less perfect, servants should meet with a fimilar treatment? or that in an age fo very vicious as the present, the malignity of the wicked should, to the prejudice and oppression of the righteous, revive in a moral sense the savage cruelties practised in a literal one during the barbarian times of a Nero; when for public diversion the fervants of God were fewed-up in the skins of dead beafts, to betorne to pieces by live ones? In reality what numbers of persons of the greatest virtue and merit are not now-o'days by way of sport most cruelly disfigured. rent and worried in their credit, peace and property by the brutal tongues and minds and hearts and hands of the malicious? But ah! the time will come (as David fays) when the Lord shall be seen doing Judgments: -A time, when the injured shall be righted and the injurer be treated according to the perversity of his heart: A time, when (eternal praise to thee, O Lord!) thou wilt convince all men, that to thee belongeth mency; because thou wilt then restore to every one according to his works. Go then, oh wretched violators of all divine and human laws! and glory in your iniquity for a while. Go, inhuman defamers of the unblemished virgin and untainted matron! barbatous plunderers of the helpless orphan and afflicted SASHV.

flicted widow! heartless oppressors of the upright poor! go riot in your mischiefs while on earth. Think, hatch, and do and fay and fpread all that is naught against them. But know withal, that, to their comfort and your defolation, the day will come, when you will think and fay and wish to have acted otherwise: a day, when, drenched in the river Judgment with the bitter waters of restitution, you will be forced to restore to them the property, the peace, the honour, you now dare to rob them of: a day, when all the weight of your iniquities to others will fall-back on your own convicted heads. For then, as the prophet has foretold you, The righteous will fland with undaunted fortitude before you their infultors, who robbed them of their labours : While you yourselves, repenting and groaning through anguish of spirit, shall wring your hands and weep and fay: Ah! who would have thought it? These are They, whom we formerly held in derision and as a parable of reproach. Fools that we were! we accounted their life madness and their end to be without bonour. But behold! bow are they reckoned among the children of God, and bow their lot is among the faints ! Oh the painful restitution for unmolified finners to make!

COURAGE mean time, oh faithful fervants of God! stand fast, I conjure you, in the paths of christian virtue. Suffer neiand of smale all to ther .200

ther the fmiles, nor the frowns; neither the praises, nor the reproaches of a wicked world; neither life, nor death, nor any created confideration to wean you from the love of your Redeemer Jesus. Make it your invariable rule of life, --- never to do what you know to be wrong and difpleasing to God, though the whole world were disposed to approve and reward you for it; -nor ever to swerve from what you know to be right and pleasing in his fight, though all human nature, were to hate, despise and persecute you for it. Shun evil with a watchful eye, and steadily adhere to good. Let no mean worldly motives or respects divert you from the close pursuit of piety and virtue: But rather doing all you do for the pure love of God, despise the world and its applause or censure. What is the world to you? Leave it to its own perversity; and while, in submission to the will of heaven, you are constrained to struggle in it, study every one the blessed art of bearing and forbearing. Forbear from its contaminations; and patiently bearing with its infults, fay to it with the great Vessel of election:-To me it is of little moment, that I be judged of you or of any man's judgment - be that judgeth me is the Lord, who will one day bring to light the bidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of bearts. And then every man will receive of God the praise or the blame he hath deserved. Thus, oh

oh righteous souls strive-on till you be safely embarked in the slood of sinal Judgment, when the bitter waters of that mystic river, shall be a sanctifying hyssop to wash-off every dirt thrown at you. Wait (I say) for that happy period: Happy to You, though satal to the wicked: Happy to You; because it will restore to you the plenty, peace and ease and honour, which the unrighteous rob you of in this life: But satal (alas!) to Them; because it will reduce them to all that infamy, which is their due; and doubly satal, because it will restore to them the Fear they have lost of their offended God.

CHRISTIANS expect me not to describe to you the bitter pangs, which hardened finners will be compelled to feel, when the fear of their offended God shall be restored to them. If tongues and pens guided by the Holy Ghost are reduced to hint their terrors of that period rather in mysterious exclamations, than in familiar phrases; who shall give an adequate idea of the dread, which then will feize the wicked? Such was the inbred apprehension of holy Job at the bare thought of facing his almighty Judge, that he would joyfully have chosen for a time even hell itself for a retreat from his tremendous aspect.-Oh my terror-striking Judge! (says he) what though I have not finned, still does my eye remain in bit-

bitterness .-- Ab! who will grant me, that thou protect me in bell, and that thou bide me there till thy fury be past; so that thou do but appoint me a time, in which thou remember me, to withdraw me from thence. And can the wicked hear thus much without trembling for themselves? For oh! what cause of terror must not That be to sinners. which can make a temporary abode in hell defireable even to the innocent! It was doubtless, a like reflection, which made the valiant Peter also cry-out with equal trembling :- If the righteous man shall with difficulty be faved; ab! what shall become of the Unrighteous? Yet were these Two of of the choicest of God's favorites. If then these angels in the flesh could feel so much dread at the remembrance of God's final Judgment; how much greater must not the terrors be of wretches made-up of guilt and obstinacy; when they shall be forced to appear before him? If faints, who loved and hankered after God, could tremble thus to approach him; oh! think how they will be compelled to quake and fhrink before him, who pass their lives in the practice of infulting him!

CONSTANTINE the monothelite emperor, not content with forcing his brother Theodofius into holy Orders, must needs like another Cain, dip his hands in his blood. He did so: and like that first of

fratricides too, he instantly inherited with His cruelty a wretched entail of incessant remorfes and terrors. In the thickest gloom of night his tortured conscience would often present to his scared imagination the deathpale ghost of his affaffinated brother approaching his bed-fide; where with a cup in hand filled with his reeking blood he feemed to call upon the guilty wretch in these reproachful accents:-" rise, brother, " rife; and drink thy fill of what thou " hast so long thirsted after." At these fancied founds the frighted murderer would start with horror from his bed; scamper this way and that, regardless and unknowing whither; but every where in equal anguish, sweatings, tremblings and convulfive agitations; The hours of fost repose for others, to him were just so many ages of distress and agony. He changes apartment, changes palace and changes air; but alas! all is tried in vain: His restless conscience, the feat of all his terrors, haunts him every where: Every where he finds his hateful, hated felf: and every where he is still purfued by the dread idea of a butchered brother holding-out to his frighted fancy the bloody cup, with a, -drink, brother, drink. pendous power of fear when kindled and maintained by consciousness of heinous guilt! -But oh Constantius! Constantius! too heedless of thy name and dignity! what means

means all this unmanly panic? thefe more than womanish alarms! why start thus at a shadow? at the shadow of a man? of a brother? of a peacefu! churchman?—Ah Christians! if a very vapour of the brain can thus affright a foldier and a fovereign, when disarmed by his crimes; what an abyss of terrors must not the conscience be of an unconverted finner in the presence of his exasperated God and Judge! To form a tolerable guess at the horrors which will and must attend the Culprit in that perilous moment, we need but reflect on those, which even on this fide the grave a heinous offender is wont to abound with in the very bosom of safety. Even in this life nothing is fo ingenious, nothing fo fuccessful at tormenting the wicked as the wicked commonly are at tormenting themselves. In the bloom of life, health and vigour; in the zenith of grandeur, affluence and power, without a neighbouring foe, or a hurtful weapon near them, they need nothing more to fill their fouls with racking dread than their own evil conscience. For that alone can bloat a gnat to an elephant; a straw to an overfized beam; nay a grain of fand to an enormous mountain. A bad conscience can swell the chirpings of a sparrow to the roarings of a lion, and form the loudest thunder out of the most delicate music. Where conscience accuses a lamb appears a judge;

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judge; an easy chair, a bench of justice; and the softest bed of down becomes a rack of

the sharpest tortures.

OH finful Christians then! oh unrelenting finners! think for a minute and be ferious." If the magnifying optic of an evil conscience can fwell thus enormously the most harmless of things into objects of terror to the wicked, even in this life; if guilt could give fuch force to those gentle words, (whether uttered, or but fancied) drink, brother drink; and make them found in the ears of an emperor more dreadful than the loudest thunder of the skies; judge what convulsive dread must wring your hearts, if unhappily for you the river Judgmn t shall hereafter wast your souls in their prefent unconverted unprepared condition to the tribunal of your offended Maker: that aweful bench of Justice, where God himself will be your Judge; where demons will be your profecutors, and hell will be your expectation. How will not your felf-condemning fouls wish they could shrink to atoms; when beholding in the mystic cup of Christ's once wounded body, the precious blood which you so often trampled under foot with your iniquities, you hear that Lord of love (then no more the patient faviour, but the exasperated sovereign) say to you every one, with stern serenity: " Here, thankless " Christian; glut thee with the deadly " draught

" draught my apostles warned thee of "Here unnatural brother! drink now thy fill of condemnation from the same preci-!! ous mystic cup, out of which thou wouldst " not drink Salvation, while within thy " reach. "-Thoughtless Creatures! how will you then be able to bear the awe of Christ's majestic angry countenance: when (as we read in the Acts of the Apostles) an Ananias had not the power to stand the frown of angry Peter, but fell at his feet; and, as if blafted by the feverity of his aspect, expired in an instant? Though after all, this mighty, this terror-striking Peter was nothing greater than a poor artless and unlettered fisherman meanly subsisted by the lowly occupation of his net.

Oh that I could but make you comprehend the unmeasurable distance there is between the sublimest dignity of a meer created Being, and the tremendous majesty of that God-man, who is to judge the living and the dead! The smallest speck of dirt bears a nearer proportion to the whole Creation, than does the glory of the highest Angel to That of Christ. And yet do libertines not tremble to offend him? While studiously seeking the thickest gloom of night, to skreen their evil-deeds from mortal eyes, and to elude the dreaded sight of Parents, Friends, nay oftentimes of absolute Dependents; still do they venture boldly to lie, to

fwear,

swear, foreswear, defraud, corrupt, betray, oppress and ruin others and themselves in the fight of their all-weighing Judge ? Though conscious that the day will come, (and no one knows how foon) when, embarked in the river Judgment, they will be cast before the Throne of God's impartial Justice, with all their filth about them; there to render a minute account of every idle word, nay of every hidden, unprofitable thought; still do they dare to fully their immortal fouls, with drunkenness, impiety. uncleannesses and many a crime too foul to name? Alas! too certainly they dare do it: Too fatally they do it, without fear or shame.

If this were not an Evil too notorious to be questioned and too enormous to be exaggerated; I should scarcely expect to gain belief. But I appeal to fad experience for its truth. With what an intrepidity of irreverend minds do not the bulk of mankind, in the present age, bid open defiance to the most facred laws of God, of church, of state, of nations and of nature, without a bluft, without one symptom of remorfe or shame, wherever temporal punishment can be eluded? How common is it to fee them pass the day in the most dissolute indulgence of their every lawless passion, and the most violent oppression of all within their power to crush; and yet to behold them fleeping-out those hours

hours of night, which are not taken-up with mischief, in the profoundest self-security? And (which is still more lamentable!) the bare attempt to rouse them from their dangerous infensibility, is now o'-days by almost general consent, considered as a fettled mark of folly, bigotry, or moroseness; and made a standing butt of ridicule, for witlings to level at. But ah mistaken, selfdeluding mortals! however now you flight and laugh at the matter of your mifery; the time will come, and peradventure fooner than you expect it; when embarked in the river Judgment, your long loft Fears of your offended God will (if you wait till then for doing penance) be all restored to you; and your quaking fouls will then have just cause to cry-out in the pfalmist's words. Fear and Trembling are come upon me, and darkness bas overwhelmed me.

THESE (oh beloved Christians!) are no vain Speculations; but downright Scripture Truths; real Articles of Faith, or reasonable inferences from them. Can we nevertheless flatter ourselves, that our manner of living is an argument of our faith in these Truths? Do we at all live like persons, who believe in a final Judgment? Have we hitherto made any preparation for meeting it with safety. Suppose a not impossible Case, namely, that a few instants hence, we should hear the satal trumpet sounding in

our ears, fee the fun eclipfed, and feel the earth quake from its foundations, beneath our feet. Suppose in a word this very day fhould chance to be the very day of Judgment: (And such it really will be to every one who dies this day, whether fuddenly, or otherwise.) Are we in readiness to appear before the heavenly Issus! Alas! I fear. we are not. If God furprised us in this present hour; I fear, that the major part of the Christians here affembled would be inclined to call on this very edifice to cover them, that they might not behold their flighted Judge's angry countenance. But (thanks to his goodness and long sufferance) that is not our Case as yet: That Day as yet is probably not come for us. The heavens are not darkened : the earth is ftill: And we have happily some leifure left us to look forward and guard ourselves against those final terrors. We have still God's church and facraments and grace to help us, towards rendering that Judgment a bleffing to us, if we wish to have it such. If we begin forthwith; we still have time, not only to soften, but to remove God's wrath. And the furest way to do fo, will be to employ from this instant forward the leifure left us in works of penance and felf humiliation? If you judge your selves, says the Apostle, you will not be judged. If seriously trying and fifting every one your own Conscience, you pass

pass arigorous sentence on your sins, and endeavour equitably to attone for them on
this side the grave: If you snatch the rod
out of the hands of Jesus, to execute justice
on yourselves in this life; he will not demand it back out of yours, to reek ven-

geance on you in the next.

Be prudent therefore, my friends, and hoard the precious leifure mercifully granted you, towards escaping the rigours of God's final Judgment. To-day, if you bear the Voice of the Lord, barden not your bearts. Rather let the sweetness of his gracious invitations melt you to a speedy compliance. Yes to-day before to-morrow; without waiting till it better suit your temporal convenience; without waiting for another difcourse on the present subject; in a word without one minute's delay, after the close of This, retire strait every one to your closet, retire into yourselves. There earnestly set about the great business of preparing to embark with fafety in the tremendous flood of Judgment, that its bitter waters may be converted to a fertile fource of Bleffings within you, and credit the fidelity, if not of your innocence, at least of your repentance. Examine feriously your Consciences: Endeavour affiduously to rectify whatever you find amiss in your past Conduct : And for the future make it your constant favourite study, by a daily recollection of God'e

God's aweful justice to improve your filial Fear of him: That that fountain of life thus improved with constant fresh recruits of grace may water and enrich the spiritual paradise of your hearts, with every christian virtue; till, centering all your affections in the Abyss of the Almighty's uncreated love, He shall so replenish you with his divine spirit, that, as our Saviour has promised, whole Rivers of the Water of eternal life shall flow out of your Bowels:

Which, &c.



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SECOND DISCOURSE UPON JUDGMENT.

A river issued-out of the place of pleafure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the name of the second is GIHON.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10. 13.

You, that as the hebrew word Gihon both fignifies impetuous and fignifies a-breast, it is strictly applicable to man's final Judgment; that impetuous, mystic flood of bitterness, which, fallying from the indignant Breast of an exasperated God, will at length retaliate on unrepenting sinners all their abuse of his long forbearance. This then (oh Christians) is the second of those four important mystic rivers, to which the single stream of a holy silial Fear of God directs us; that we may there-with water the spiritual paradise of our hearts: This the second

of those four mighty heads, on which our eternal fate depends, and which therefore it behoves us all to found and fathom in good time: This, in a word, is the tremendous Gibon, the impetuous flood, the mystic collection of bitter waters of restitution, prefigured (as I told you in my last discourse) in the sacred bitter waters of the law of jealoufy: Waters appointed to decide between the jealous God of hofts and his beloved spouses, the souls of men; by crediting and rewarding the virtue and fidelity of the Good, and confounding and chastifing the faithless conduct of the Bad. For, as I undertook to shew you, that final Judgment will be indeed a flood of threefold restitution; by restoring to the Good that peace and honour, which they are often robbed of in this world; by restoring to finners the just fear they are so very apt to lose of their offended God; and by restoring to the Almighty Justice, that due esteem, which his long-sufferance too frequently and too generally lessens in the minds of the unrighteous.

How sweet the first of these three kinds of restitution will prove to the Righteous, and how extremely bitter to the Wicked, I have already shewn you in my last discourse, and therein jointly given you some idea of the additional distress, which must attend on These, by the sears they have lost of Q 2

their offended God being given-back to them. To finish therefore this very weighty subject, I shall now proceed to give you some farther arguments of that Distress; and withal shall endeavour to make you sensible of the unmeasurable woe, which will compleat the stubborn sinner's ruin, by restoring to God's Justice that true esteems, which his Long-sufferance has lessened, nay almost annihilated in the minds of reprobates.

MEAN-TIME (oh gentle Jesus, our future Judge, but present Saviour!) impart thy efficacious grace to me and all this audience, to profit by the saving Truths thou biddest me now unfold. Give to my speech the power of persuasion necessary to allure to thee the hearts of all here present: Bestow on them the gift of christian wisdom: And grant us all so to improve henceforth our filial fear of thee in this life, that we may happily escape all terrors in the next.

It such favorites of God as a Job and a Saint Peter were scarcely able to support the sears they were seized with at the bare apprehension of God's Judgment, while considered as remote; how shall his enemies bear-up amidst their terrors, when that judgment shall be present? If saints, who loved and longed to be with God, have trembled,

trembled, as we find they did at the simple thought of his distant approach; how will not his aweful actual appearance force those profligates to shudder, who have hated and infulted him! In a word, Christians: if the conscience of the wicked be an abyfs of perpetual terrors to them even in this life, as we have feen in the person of the wicked emperor Constantius; and as we may fee in the innumerable examples of the like nature, which every age and country affords us; oh! judge what and how dreadful a consternation their consciences must throw them into in the world to come. when compelled to appear and stand an impartial trial before their injured God!

OH daring libertine! (if such a one be here!) shouldest thou, which gracious heaven forbid, carry thy rash presumption to the last extreme of life; thou wilt find thyfelf most sadly undeceived, when past the fatal boundary of death. For then (alas!) an other-guest horror will seize thy trembling spirit, than That which shook the quaking knees of frighted Bellhazzar. Yes: thy felf-convicted foul will shake and shrink to all the impotence of guilty consternation at that perplexing period; when, hurried away by legions of infernal spirits from thy death-bed to the Judgment-seat of Jesus, thou beholdest that Lord of majesty (once fo meek, fo lowly, fo despised) fitting allglorious, severe and terrible in his resplendenr throne of Justice, to judge and sentence

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thee; furrounded, as he then will be, by his beloved Apostles ranged on the seats of fplendour promised them; thenceforth no more thy leaders and instructors, but the equitable Jury to convict thee: Then and there thou shalt behold thrown-open to thy view the gates of heaven; not to thy joy, but to thy encrease of anguish; not to admit thee in, but barely to shew thee the blife, thou hast forfeited forever.' There those of thy departed friends and kindred, whose virtuous lives thy wicked deeds difgraced, will fcorn thy former friendship and alliance and be the first to call for vengeance on thee. There also wilt thou see laid gaping-wide below thee, that hell which yawns to fwallow thee; and whence thou wilt be stunned with the desperate cries of parents, children, confort, or acquaintance; perhaps of all these names at once, demanding justice, calling for punishment of those crimes, by which thou didst promote their reprobation. On one fide thou wilt behold with difmay the heavenly host casting exasperated looks upon thee, and hear them unanimously applaud the equitable sentence of condemnation pronounced against thee: and on the other thou wilt fee a hideous tribe of demons pukingforth their furious malicious charge against thee: While thou thy felf wilt stand amazed and speechless; without one advocate to emot til moit havsett ding sin a en plead

plead thy cause; without one witness in thy favour; without one plea to alledge in arrest of judgment: Thyself thy harshest profecutor; thy injured proftituted confcience thy worst accuser; and thy own hardened Will thy heaviest condemnation. Ah! how will not then all the just fears of thy offended God, which now thou feemest to have loft, be copiously restored to thee! how warmly then wilt thou not call and wish. and wish and call again upon the bills to cover thee, and on the mountains to fall upon thee! - But! - then (alas!) there will be no more either hills or mountains to afford thee shelter. For then thou Thyself, naked. and stript of all that is corporeal, wilt be far out of the reach of every other matter than that of anguish.

It is not long, revered Christians, since this vast Capital and nation were struck on a sudden with a just and general terror, on barely receiving an imperfect account of the stall catastrophe at Liston. And what human breast could be so hardened, as to be able to hear without trembling the dreadful tidings of the sudden ruin of one of the oldest, richest, fairest, finest, noblest, cities throughout christendom smitten by the annihilating hand of God? Who but must quake to consider such an instantaneous overthrow of houses, temples, beasts and men by thousands? the earth shaken from its foundations?

dations? the winds let loofe, and with relentless fury bearing before them all things in their way, both living and inanimate? thick beams of lighted fulphur darted through the skies, to spread destruction where earth and air could not? And the unbridled waters (where earth and air and fire feemed to fpare) burfting their boundaries to compleat the ravage? - Horrible spectacle to see, to hear, or even to reflect on! the elements at mutual war! and in the midst of them, on one hand, thoufands of human Individuals deftroyed in a few minutes! many of whom (as you perhaps now are) were fcarce an hour before forming deep schemes and mighty projects, (for half an age to come) of bufiness, pleafure, bargains, contracts, weddings, feafts and entertainments! and on the other hand, vast numbers of their frighted, listless, helpless Survivors wildly scampering this way and that over the very mangled carcases of friends and kindred, in search of fafety from the innumerable, ponderous, rattling, deathful mischiefs falling thick around them ! still every where met and menaced by fresh succeeding horrors of equal peril, and every where reduced to the folitary solace of weeping, shuddering, shriek+ ing, and wringing their wretched hands; till weary of their miserable existence they called

called upon the bills to cover them, and on

the mountains to fall upon them,

SUCH, very lately (fo lately that the youngest here must remember it) was the diffresful situation of our friends and neighbours the Portuguese. And it was an imperfect account of their diffress, that caused the general alarm among us, which it is hardly possible for the frailest memory ever to forget. Think then, oh Christians, if a bare imperfect recital of those distant evils could strike with so great and universal terror, as we know it did, this almost heavendefying city; how much greater must not the terrors be of an unrepenting finner, when hurried from this world into another and there constrained to stand in the aweful presence of his almighty offended Judge? For, what terrors can a few jarring elements have in them, which may compare with the dreadful circumstances of a whole angry court of heaven, darting on a convicted criminal from millions of radiant eyes incessant beams of blasting indignation? - of an all-powerful and all-just Judge, launcing from his resplendent throne the weight of all his vengeance on the culprit's head? - and of a whole hell beneath him prepared to execute the Judge's equitable sentence? Go then; and, when you have well considered this, doubt (if you can) that the just fear of God, which now the stubborn

stubborn finner banishes from his thoughts. will be abundantly restored to him at that distressful juncture : - A juncture wherein the only dilemma will be, which he has the greatest cause to fear, — the heaven, that denies him entrance, — or the hell, that is gaping to receive him.

DEARLY beloved fellow-finners then! should this (which thou, oh loving Jesus, graciously avert!) ever be the wretched case with any of us; how shall we act? Shall we, as in earthly calamities, try to appeale our angry Lord with the public acknowledgement of our misdeeds? ah! what can our acknowledgements avail, when too late for reformation and atonement? And yet it is certain, that, however little they will then avail, the finner will be forced to the confusion of making them. For, as the Lord affures us, in the end of a man is the difcovery of his works. Yes: spite of all his prefent obstinacy in fin: spite of all his present industry, art and care to hide them, the finner in the end will be compelled to a full discovery of his works, however till then profoundly concealed. Yes: then he himfelf will be forced to cry: - " My God! " I confess, I have most grievously sinned " against thee; and my crimes, encreasing " from my childhood to my death, have " exceeded all measure, weight and num-" ber. I have left no evil unpractifed, " which I had any temptation to commit:

" I have

"I have made no distinction of persons, places, or times; and paid no regard to " remorfes, or checks: I have been wicked " by day without shame, by night without " fear; in times of toleration, in times of " correction; after numberless graces, gifts " and benefits received; nay often in the " very act of receiving them: I have " not only done evil myself, but caused others to do it; and thus made myself " the wicked chief of a wicked train of " accomplices: All this I have done too " with perversity, because I did it with " full knowledge, deliberation, and obsti-" nacy. In short, I have most hemously " finned: What can I say more?" - Ah hapless wretch! all thou can'st say will then avail thee nothing. Thy all-feeing Judge will need no confessions of thine to convict thee. For then all thy crimes, the most concealed (even those which were with fo much caution wrapt-up by thee in the darkest shades of night, and scarcely trusted to the breast of an accomplice but with folemn ties of the bitterest oaths and imprecations) will be all exposed in open day to the naked eye of God, of faints, of angels, of reprobates and devils. They shall be manifested to all flesh, even to a surfeit of the fight, says the Lord by the mouth of his prophet Isaiah. Can you then (oh libertines!) be conscious of thus much; and yet

yet perfift in your finful courses? - and yet fuffer another dangerous night to pass, before you return to God in a fincere converfion ! - and yet, I fay, put-off to the uncertain morrow that necessary work of repentance and reformation, for which one other day may be too late? Alas! if you neglect the leifure granted you of this prefent day; the morrow may not possibly be yours. Perhaps this very day; perhaps in one short hour, without the previous notice of one fingle minute, you may be fummoned to embark in the tremendous flood of final Judgment and Restitution, that mystic river, whose bitter waters, if they overtake you ere you are prepared by previous repentance, will give you back (but then too late) your long loft fear of your offended God.

So likewise then they will restore to God's unblemished Justice, that just esteem, which it has almost lost among the wicked. In fact, oh God of vengeance! in what repute is thy Justice held by the bulk of mortals in the present age? What though thy prophet tells us, that thou art indeed slow to anger, but terrible in thy wrath? Nevertheless, where is the puny, petty magistrate of the earth, that, with his paultry, paper-jail, is not more seared, more honoured, and more obeyed, than Thou in general art, with all thy threats and hell? But ah my patient equi-

equitable Lord! the time will come when the aftonished world will be compelled to do justice to thy injured Equity. Yes, Christians: the day will come, when, as the prophet says, the Lord will be known and seen,

exerting bis fudgments, olar bas same.

TELL me not, that the Almighty has already fully displayed the rigour of them in the temporal feverity with which he has fo often publicly chaftifed the wicked. It is a gross illusion, as we are forewarned in the book of holy Job. For, now (that is, in this world) the Lord exerts not all his wrath, nor chaftifes wickedness to the extreme of rigour. It is true, that God's anger sometimes punishes the daring wicked even on this side death, with fome appearance of feverity. But still the lenity, with which his earthly Scourges are tempered, is fuch, that the very harshest of his temporary punishments may rather be said to light upon the sinner, like the gentle stillings of a summer dew, in flowly meafured drops, than to pour on him, like a winter from, in thick oppreffive rain. It is only beyond the grave that the divine indignation (being swelled by man's perversity into consummate wrath) breaks all the boundaries of clemency and, like a bursting cataract, showers-down on the unrepenting finner's head the weight of all his vengeance. and find hand a more Asten bas encount on Bur

But, " is not this, you will fay, a glar-" ing contradiction of experience? Did not "God in his wrath overthrow a finful Ba-" bylon? a Tyre? a Sidon, and many wick-" ed cities more? Did he not lay waste his " favourite Jerusalem? And has he not de-" stroyed whole nations with earthquakes, " inundations, famine, fword and pesti-" lence?" Yes: all this is true: and yet it is also true, that in so doing he punished not wickedness to the extreme of rigour. -" What, you will reply! did he not de-" stroy, with sudden fire from heaven, a " Sodom and Gomorrab?" Too certainly he did so. And so (alas, I fear!) he may one day destroy poor London and it's fister-finners; unless (as cautious Holland did some few years fince) this not less prudent and discerning Nation resolve in time to prevent the threatening mischief, by mercifully and speedily applying fire and steel, to extirpate, (root and branch) a horrid, foul, revolting, crying crime; which hell (as if too delicate to bear it) feems to have cast-forth from its unclean bowels, and latterly difgorged upon this christian Island. And should the Sovereign Source of purity, the almighty abhorrer of all uncleanness, be so far incensed against the cruelty of our tender mercies to such nameless guilt and the unnetural monsters its perpetrators, as to reblve at length to purge the land with his ethereal

ethereal flames; it would still be true, that, in fo doing, be exerted not all bis wrath, nor punished wickedness to the extreme of rigour. But again, methinks, you urge - "What " will you fay at least to the Severity, with " which the Lord expressed his anger against " finners, by drowning all human nature in " one common deluge, eight individuals " only excepted?" What can I fay, but still the same, that God exerted not all his wrath, nor punished wickedness to the utmost extreme of rigour. No, no: All this was but the shadow of chastisement, compared with what the wicked merit, and must expect, if final Judgment overtake them unprepared. All this, though it appear to offending criminals rigorous Justice, is but the lenity and patience of an insulted God, awaking, rouzing, galling stubborn finners to repentance. Thus far, fays the Lord, I have beld my peace; I have been fill; I have refrained: But when my hand affumeth Judgment, I will reek vengeance on my enemies - I will make my arrows drunk with their blood; and my fword shall feed on their Relb. Blocky Brian Whish reining was lines

Say hardened Sinner! what will become of thee then, when thy exasperated God, for the honour of his insulted Justice, shall be urged to draw the double-edged sword of his indignation, to sheathe it in thy vitals and pierce thee with two desperate wounds

at once; the one in thy body, the other in thy foul? Wounds fo dolorous, fo incurable, that, after millions of ages, they shall still be insupportable as ever; still recent as new-gushing blood; still fresh to every fmart and bid defiance to every relief and respite! Ah thoughtless creatures! look then to yourselves, that you be not hurried-away on a fudden, with your hearts in their present disorderly condition, to appear before your awful Judge. While you have yet a little (heaven only knows how little) time to look before you; away (I conjure you) with your frauds, your prides, your lusts and malices. Before you are called to embark in the dreadful flood of Judgment, whose bitter waters are to try your fidelity to your heavenly fpouse; break with that perfidious world, that envious ferpent, and that rebellious flesh, you fwore in baptism, to renounce. Else, who shall protect you from the wrath to come ? What plea will you be able to alledge to your injured Saviour, God and spouse? How will you fustain his presence and reproaches in quality of your impartial Judge, when, shaking your guilty souls with the force of his truth, he may fay to you every one in turn, as you feverally appear before him:-

"UNGRATEFUL Creature! Darest thou to appear before me in this depraved con-

condition? thus foul? thus monstrous? thus disfigured with vice and folly? Not " thus didft thou go-forth from my indul-" gent hand. From me thou fallied'ft-" forth a clean and noble Being. " with this filth about thee didft thou depart from the baptismal font, but fair " and spotless as the purest gold. But ah! " (as my prophet fays) how is the gold tar-" nished! bow is the finest colour changed! " how foon didft thou abuse thy reason, to " forfeit my grace by thy unnatural revolt? " And though I often touched thy heart with inward checks of conscience, and " feafonable remorfes; thou didit as often " affect infentibility and deafness. How " often have not my ministers and preachers grown hoarse with warning thee in " my name, that, when I take a fet time, I " will judge and do justice? and still didst thou " perfift in finning-on, and laughing at thy " fin. But now the turn is mine, Now I " myself will laugh at thy destruction; and will scoff, when thy fear cometh; when " fudden calamity falleth upon thee, and de-" struction overtaketh thee like a whirlwind. "Now that thou art embarked in the my-" flic river of final Judgment, in the flood " of Restitution, where thou must drink " the bitter waters of my jealouly; the " time is come for thee to restore to my " Elect the plenty, peace and credit, which

" which thou didst rob them of on earth : " The time is come for restoring to thyself " thy long loft fears of Me, thy offended " Lord: The time is come for thy restoring " punctually to Me, thy injured Lover " Spouse and God, that honour, which thy " adulterous heart has fo long robbed me " of; and for refunding to my Justice that " due esteem, which it has forfeited here-" tofore in thy conceit. And now, at this " time of punctual, unavoidable RESTI-" TUTION, it is easy before me to render to every one according to his works. Hitherto not all my benefits and gifts and " graces could win thy stubborn heart to love me, while thou wast in time: And " now the time for loving me, is loft, is " fled from thee, never to be recalled. Go " then! henceforth thou wilt not, canft or not, shalt not love me. Go! henceof forth fo long as I am God (that is fore ever) my Justice demands, that I hate in " Thee an incorrigible rebel; that thou exer perience in Me an abused irreconcileable " Divinity.—Go then! depart from me, accurfed, faithless spouse, into everlasting fire; never to return from thence but " to renew thy fears and shame and ruin; or never to return from thence, but at the e general Judgment; then to receive the last completion of thy deathless misery."

OH the horrible Restitution! how terrifying even for the righteous to witness! but ah! how ruinous for unrepenting sinners to experience! Such however, my beloved Christians, is the Second of the four tremendous mystic beads of spiritual contemplation to which the sacred Stream of silial Fear of God directs our religious Attention, as to the last and most important Things whereon our eternal Lot depends. And the Name of this Second River (says my Text) is Gihon, that is allegorically speak-

ing, Man's final Judgment.

The same it is (adds Moses) which encompasseth the whole Land of Ethiopia. For the understanding of which it is proper to obferve, that the word Ethiopia is interpreted -a burning and a blackness; both which meanings nearly relate to our present subject. The first is suited to the bleffed state to which God's righteous Judgment will transport the Elect: And both are applicable to the abandoned plight to which its bitter flood will reduce the unrepenting Reprobate. For on one hand, oh! what pure and ardent flames of exftatic love and gratitude will ravish the faithful Choir of Innocents and the converted flock of timely Penitents; when they shall find the bitter draught of God's jealous Judgment changed within them to a fruitful fource of endless peace and joy !-when they shall see their for-

former injuries and pains, and fears and shame converted into endless safety, rest and honour !- and hear their jealous, but loving Spouse and equitable Judge applaud their tried fidelity, and kindly fay to them: Come, ye bleffed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world! Come, faithful fervants, friends and consorts, enter into the joy of your Lord! But on the other hand, oh! what a blackness of despair and burning rage must rack the fouls of the impenitent Wicked; when, drenched to a furfeit with the bitter draught of God's avenging jealoufy, they shall be forced to give-back to the Righteous that peace and reputation, which they robbed them of! forced to take-back to themselves that Fear of their offended God. which they renounced before; and forced to make ample reparation of honour to his injured justice! banished as they then will be from his inheritance, with a-Go ye accurfed into everlasting fire; there to endure the endless burning of my wrath and the eternal blackness of thy own despair!

On heavens! what tongue can utter, or what mind conceive the dreadful state of deathless souls thus banished forever from their God? "Oh enchanting Beauty! (the wretches will be forced to cry, even amidst their desolation) Oh source of joys beyond conception great! must we forever lose "the

the blifsful fight of thee, and wail that loss in vain? ah wretches that we were! why were we not afraid of losing thee, while yet our fears would have been of use? Oh God! oh Father! Too long injured Spouse! Thrice precious Names by us forever forfeited! Oh sovereign, only, boundless Good of All, but us! All, all, but misery, is lost to us, in losing thee!" Thus will the unhappy souls have cause to exclaim:—and That with unbridled rage:—and That with the utmost frenzy of despair:—And That without redress; and without an end, or interval of respite.

DEAR fellow-finners then ! is it not better to prevent so sad and useless a regret of losing God, while we have time to feek him; and are fure of finding, if we feek him truly? Be it then henceforward your constant favorite study, to seek him in good earnest, with a holy filial fear of losing him; and labour to improve from day to day that filial fear, by a ferious recollection of his awful Judgments. Remember that He, who is now, at once and all in one, your fond indulgent Parent, Friend and Spouse. will one day be your righteous Judge; and will try, with the bitter waters of his jealoufy, whether or not your fidelity be staunch. And oh! while you have time, make ready, I conjure you, for that fiery trial,

by frequent fruitful meditations on your four last things: That, remembering these, you may fin no more: That remembering these, you may wipe-off your past offences with penitential tears: That remembering these, you may enrich yourselves, with those christian virtues, which will fit you for appearing in his aweful presence. For, oh Lord of majesty! If angels themselves will tremble on that day of universal Restitution; how ought not finners, fuch as we are, to fhudder at the thought of appearing before thee unprovided with that nuptial garment of justifying grace, which can alone secure us against an eternal divorce from thee! Oh loving injured Spouse then! pardon our past unfaithful conduct, and accept our prefent reformation. We are forry from the bottom of our hearts, that ever we ungratefully displeased thee. Reject not our forrow and purpose of amendment; but graciously improve and make them lafting as our lives. It is true, dear Lord, that our repentance can never be proportioned to our guilt, But, where is thy precious blood? what comes of thy bitter death and passion? Shall these avail us nothing? It cannot be. Thy precious heart once wounded for the love of us will not permit us to be loft, while we defire and labour to be faved. Oh fins of human nature! how do you make me tremble? Oh open arms of Jesus! how do

you not bid me hope!! Let then (oh gracious Jesus) those open arms remain extended, to keep us always mindful of thy suture Judgment; and make that tremendous flood of Restitution supply our filial sear of thee with daily new recruits of vigour: That this fountain of life, after watering the spiritual paradise of our hearts and enriching it with every christian virtue, may flow-back with all our affections into the abyse of thy uncreated love, and make us thine for ever: Thus verifying thy psalmist's words,—Blessed are all who fear the Lord and who walk in his ways. Which, &c.



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WATERS

OF

DESOLATION.

IN Two DISCOURSES ON HELL.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

A river issued-out of the place of pleafure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the name of the third river is HIDDEKEL.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10. 14.

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In SIGHT of the pains and joys of a future state, revered Christians, well might the ravished psalmist cry-out to God:

—Depth calls upon depth in the voice of thy flood-gates. For all the divine dispensations with regard to man, are so many harmonious depths of infinite wisdom; which call every one on the rest, and mutually bear witness to the awefulness of one another. No sooner do we return to God, than he lays-open the slood-gates of his love, and sends-forth from that eternal source of pleasure the mystic stream of silial fear of Him, to water the spiritual paradise of our converted.

verted hearts. And no fooner does the bleffed ffream flow into them, than it invites our reflections to the ultimate limits of our temporal existence: from whence dividing our apprehensions and alternately applying them to the frequent ferious review of the four aweful beads of religious contemplation. Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven, it calls on those tremendous heads to bear witness to the reasonable necessity and justness of our filial Awe of God. How faithfully Death and Judgment have answered to the call, and borne witness to Truth, I hope, I have convinced you in my preceding Observations: And how loudly Hell echoes to their concurring evidence, my present and immediately subsequent discourse, will equally convince you; if you fuffer your thoughts to travel with mine down to the margin of that horrible flood: the Third of the four immense mystic rivers of Eternity. And the name of the third river (fays my text) is HIDDEKEL, that is to fay (when interpreted out of Hebrew into English) an uncouth Sound : And fuch is Hell.

OH Hiddekel! oh Hell! oh truly uncouth Sound! harsh indeed thou art and dreadful to pronounce; and still more terrible for mortals to conceive: but oh how much more horrible to endure! I presume, Christians, that, after what I have said of Death and Judgment, you are pretty well convinced.

Vinced, that they are two immensely horrible floods. But alas! what are all the horrors of both put together, if compared with those which are peculiar only to Hell? Both those floods indeed are extremely terrifying; because the Waters of each are beyond expression bitter to the wicked. Ah! how much more terrifying a flood then must not Hell be; the Waters of which, besides being unutterably bitter, must be irremedia-

ble eternal?

DEARLY beloved Christians! - That God, though infinitely lovely in himself, should nevertheless be forced, as it were, to fet-up his heaven to fale, to purchase our love; is a manifest proof of our deplorable blindness of heart :- That God, with all his heaven, still defrauded of our Affections should be incensed to create a Hell, to Tour us to obey him at least out of fear; is an undeniable argument of our amazing ingratitude: -- But, that God, with all his heaven and all his Hell, can scarcely gain the hearts of men either to love him, or to fear him; is—what shall I call it?—oh perverfity without a parallel! extravagance without a name! For my own part, I can ascribe so absurd an excess (at least in the christian part of human species) to no other cause than to This: that, though they know and believe, that there is a Hell, they feldom or never reflect on its miseries. This

I take to be the grand reason, why Christians in general talk to very much of Hell, and take so very little pains to avoid it. Unthinking Creatures! therefore it is in fact, that the number is so very small of those, who do avoid it. Ah! let none of Us, through a like Giddiness, make part of the wretched many; who acquire the knowledge of it at their own irreparable los. No: Rather let us endeavour to acquire that knowledge, while it may be of use to us, to escape that worst of evils. To Hell then let us descend in the midst of our days, with the godly Ezechias. To Hell let us stoop our contemplative spirits, and dwell there awhile with religious attention; that, acquainted with its horrors, we may return thence amended for the rest of our lives; and so improve our filial fear of God on this fide the grave, as to leave ourselves nothing to dread on the other.

Death then, Christians, as we have already seen, is a truly dangerous stream; because it is an assemblage of the waters of contradiction: And Judgment, as we have also seen, is an immensely dreadful stream; because it is a junction of the Waters of Restitution: But Hell, as we now shall see, is a far more horrible flood than both; because it is an eternal confluence of the Waters of desolation. For, as I shall make it plain to you, that Hell, which is destined

to be the portion of impenitent finners, is a complicated Abys of threefold desolation to excess:—desolation from infinite misery;—desolation from infinite happiness;—And desolation from infinite iniquity.

On my divine Redeemer! affift me now with thy enlightening grace, and help me to make these Christians comprehend the horrors of that dread abyss. Give to my words, oh Word eternal, thy efficacious unction to describe to them that boundless sea of sorrows: That strengthening from thence their filial sear of thee in this life, they may escape all desolation in the next.

How ingenious soever human barbarity be, to sharpen the tortures of the wretched; it never can reach to make those tortures all at once both tedious and acute to excess. Either nature gives way to the extremes of pain, and soon ceases to suffer, by ceasing to live; or pain is overcome by the superior force of nature, and fortitude triumphs over sensation. Fire itself, though the acutest of all known instruments of earthly smart, is sometimes the kindest too; by destroying anguish the sooner, the more severely it rages. Nay even the lingering cruelty of those slow-fed sires, whose starvelling rage owes half its power of killing

to the help of time, how tedious foever it appear to human weakness, is in the main but impotent; rarely able to protract its tormenting influence beyond the flender space of a few hours. Horrible indeed it must have been to behold the Macrabean Champions full of life, with their mangled limbs fcattered round them, dripping-out their half-fried bowels in a red-hot cauldron. And yet before the day had well measuredout one half its courfe, their pains were at an end; and the glorious heroes, fafe at reft in Abraham's peaceful bosom, were feasting on the joyous expectation of that immortal Crown, which now they have poffest for almost eighteen Centuries. Oh earthly fire then! how impotent is all thy force compared with the eternal flames of Hell! oh Hell! what earthly torments can compare with thine? Scourges, fcorpions, pinchers, fleaings, burnings and difmemberings alive, what are they all, but feeble lifeles ima-ges of Hell? Not these, nor all the implements of woe, which heavenly vengeance has exerted these five thousand years and upwards, to humble and chaftife the arrogance of finners, can mount to more than gentle preludes to God's eternal anger. All are no more, than (as the pfalmift fays) & way made to the path of God's wrath. Judge then, Christians, what his wrath itself must

ALL the pains of this life have their feveral limits, and therefore they never torment us all together. They afflict only one by one, or at most in but small combinations; and those only against some of our members at a time, as for example, our eyes, our ears, our stomach, limbs, or bowels, and so on. And yet what anguish shall not a man fuffer from one fingle fevere diforder (though in but one of these parts) so long as it rages to excess? what weary days and restless nights shall he not pass from the bare pain of an aching gum, or tooth? How immense then must not his desolation be; were he reduced (but during one whole day) to feel the united pangs of cholic, cramp and gout and stone to extremity; together with the acutest dolours in his eyes, his ears, his teeth, his bowels, head and heart, and every limb and joint and nerve and pore about him? Now more than a complication of all these the unrepenting profligate must feel in hell, and That for all eternity. For there their Tortures will admit of no encrease. And that their fufferings may never abate; They and the wretched instruments of their distress will be falted with fire, as Christ himself assures us in the ninth of St. Mark. And that obedient fire, with an efficacy derived from above, will exactly fulfil every word and Will of God on the wretched objects of his just MIA

just wrath. Does the Lord command it to fcorch like a flame, and yet chill them like fleaky fnow? it shall execute his word, as the prophet fays. Does he command it to torture, but not consume them? it shall execute bis word, and be as a pungent, but preservative salt, to embalm them (as it were) with undecaying mifery. Does he bid it fall heavy on them, as hail on the opening bud, or as a storm on the ripened harvest? like the one and the other, it shall execute his word, with eternal exactness. In fhort for the punishment of the wicked, the fire of Hell will be every thing, which its omnipotent Creator commands it to be: Fire, brimftone, bail and ice, and the Spirit of florms. That is, in the bitterness of its effects, it will be all jarring evils in one, to torment their every faculty in every manner at once. The Lord will rain upon the wicked, fays David, fnares, fire, brimftone, and a horrible tempest: This will be the portion of their cup. So that it will be jointly. and yet distinctly, a darkness to their sight; a loathsome stench to their smell; a sharp, uncouth found to their hearing; gall to their palate; and an intolerable anguish to their sense of feeling. It will be equivalent to a racking gout in their nerves, to the most twinging convulsions in their entrails, to an oppreffive Ache in their heads, and to a complication of all dolours

lours in their hearts. For as St. Jerome observes, " in Hell every torment will be

felt in the fingle punishment of fire."

BUT suppose for an instant, that there were no other Torment felt in Hell, than. that which fire is naturally wont to produce; and that in the wicked that torment affect only the tip of a finger. - What think you, Christians? Even in that case, would it be very comfortable to dwell forever in fuch a place, and in fuch a plight; when a paltry whitlow, ere it ripen, shall by dint of anguish often drive you to the brink of madness? Ah! what then must not the distress of sinners be in that oppresfive flood; where, as the pfalmist says, they will put-on malediction as a garment, and it will enter like water into their bowels, and like oil into their bones. Yes: it will encompass them about and replenish them within; and will serve them at once both for raiment and food. Even as the cotemporaries of Noah were invironed and drenched with water in the general deluge; fo will the impenitent wicked be with liquid fire in that flood of desolation. As the flood made the dry land drunk, says Ecclefiasticus, so will the wrath of the Lord do to the people, who have not ferved him. It is dreadful to think on: Yet so it is. As furely as God is eternal Truth, fo furely the merciles flames of Hell, insatiably feeding on

on those miserable Reprobates every where within and without them, will forever torment and not confume them. And the ineffable mercy as well as justice of God in fo ordaining, I have long fince demonstrated on another occasion. * Oh horrible fire then, thus to burn without pity! but oh incomparably more horrible, thus to burn without end! Dearly beloved Christians! furely you never think on this: or you would not at almost every instant pronounce damnation on one-another; nor take fuch daily pains, as too many of your do, to entail damnation on yourselves. Ah? did you but daily fix one ferious thought on Hell; it would be impossible for the most. daring of you all to resolve on being wicked. Therefore fays Ecclesiasticus to all of you: Remember your last things and you will never fin. It is for want of following this important counsel, that the world is now fo wicked; and that the wicked are likely to be fo very wretched. Even now, as in Feremiah's days, therefore it is, that the whole earth is filled with desolation : Therefore it is that Hell is daily also filling with finners, and foh the heart-breaking reflection!) daily filling with Christians; because

^{*} See Sermon, with a preface against Mr. Whiston, printed in 1742, under the following Title: — Eternal Misers the necessary Consequence of Infinite Mercy abused.

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there is no one, that lays reflection seriously to beart.

" But alas (you will say perhaps!) if " Hell be a place of fo much desolation to " its wretched inhabitants, why do they " not lift-up their Spirits to heaven in " fearch of refreshment?" Ah Christians! it would be some degree of at least negative happiness to the damned; could they amidst their mifery live in a perpetual oblivion of that bleffed mansion. Bitter indeed is their eternal confinement to the extremes of distress: but far more bitter is their fatal liberty of lifting-up their thoughts, when too late, to the feats of unbounded blifs. With their limbs in a racking restraint; they endure indeed an intolerable Hell; but with their minds quite at large, they fuffer a still more insupportable paradise: And what with literal truth has been faid of the infamous citizens of Sodom, may with equal truth be allegorically faid of the wretched inhabitants of Hell. - that the Lord pours-forth on their guilty heads, a fiercer Hell (than That they are confined in) The antient faout of heaven itself. thers have observed, that the Almighty, in the instant of banishing the reprobate from his presence, shews them such a resplendent ray of his divine countenance, as indelibly prints on their minds an abstracted, but lively, idea of his infinite perfections,

tions, and fills them at the fame time with incurable despair of ever beholding him Fain would the hapless wretches banish from their thoughts the galling image: but (alas!) it is too deeply stamped upon their fouls, not to rack them inceffantly with the cruel remembrance. But for This, the damned would scarcely feel one half their present woes: As, but for the fight of Abraham and Lazarus, the reprobate rich man had had his anguish half diminished. He felt indeed the pangs of one Hell in the Lake of burning fire : but far feverer were the pangs of that other Hell, which he felt from the contrast in the patriarch's bosom. Both Hells tormented him feverely, but each with a different rigour; and the latter the rudest, because purely spiritual. " Oh wretched me! (met binks, I bear bim cry) what do my eyes behold? " An Abraham at rest, and I in endless mise fery? Sorely indeed am I tormented in " this flame: but oh! by far more forely in that hateful contrast. Ah cruel, never dying thought! Abraham was rich, as well " as I: And yet in spite of all his wealth, " behold! he is lodged in endless peace, while I am buried in eternal woe .- And oh that Refuse of mankind! that leprous Lazarus too at rest? oh sting too keen for envy to support! how did I former-" ly fear to infect my fight with fimply " glancing

glancing at Him? And now (alas!) how does the calmness of his aspect blast Me with envy and despair? Thrice cursed abuse of riches! thrice cursed contempt of poverty! And must these woes then continue without end or measure? Oh Hell derived from infinite misery!—And must I never exchange them for the joys of heaven? oh sharper Hell derived from

" infinite felicity!"

WHEN Esau perceived, that, through Rebecca's deceit, he had lost the elder blessing of Isaac, his grief was so great, that the divine writer, to give us some idea of the vehemence of it, describes him like an enraged Lion that is caught in the toils of the huntiman: and tells us, that he cried-out with an exceeding loud roar. And yet Esau had only lost his birth-right, not his He faw indeed the favourite porfather. tion transferred from him to his younger. brother; but he found still reserved for himself the fruits of the earth, and the dew of the heavens. If then all this notwithstanding, such was the excess of grief of Esau for this exchange rather than loss; judge, Christians, how great the desolation of the reprobate must be, when, stripped for ever of their patrimony, graces, bleffings, earth and heaven, and (more than of heaven) deprived of God himself, they shall lift-up their thoughts from that horrid flood

of mifery, only to behold their younger brethren (younger, perhaps, in natural talents and spiritual endowments) reigning triumphant in the realms of blife. How often does it not happen, that the least advantage possest by another, though a friend and near ally in blood, embitters every pleasure to the person who beholds that advantage with an envious eye? Thus Rachel neither enjoyed her own beauty nor the predilection of Jacob, because Leab was fruitful. Thus a diadem to Saul was a wreath of meer thorns, for that the temples of David were circled with laurels. And thus the bare careffes of an ancient father to the fondling of his old age were fo many daggers to the rest of Ifrael's children: And only because Joseph is deck'd with a coat fomewhat more gawdy than those of his brethren, how were not the bosoms of these torne with jealoufy? And yet nor Rachel, nor Saul, nor the fons of the Patriarch, had any other cause of discontentment, than that which they drew from the contentment of others. If meer groundless envy then can draw from fuch paltry advantages, tho' poffest by friends and allies in blood, so much matter of inward bitterness; judge with what gall the envious fouls of reprobates will and must be tortured, when from their abyss of evils, they lift-up their thoughts to confider their Sovereign Good in the poffession icien

fession of the objects of their former hatred and contempt? in the poffession of those Saints, whom they treated with fo much derifion and oppression while on earth. Have I not reason then to say, that the desolation endured by the damn'd from infinite misery is less severe than That which they feel from the loss of infinite happiness in the loss of their God? For oh Lord of majesty! what a transcending defolation must it not be for immortal beings to lose thee and feel the loss of thee for ever! This is the confummation of diffress: the desolation, which renders their wretchedness a pure evil indeed; an evil without any mixture of comfort; a Hell twice told.

AND yet, Christians, dreadful as this double defolation of Hell must appear; there is another, which shocks me infinitely more; and That is the horrid inflexibility of the reprobate in hating and blaspheming God. And indeed on weighing this fingle evil against all the other evils of Hell, what thinking Creature in his fenses, can help feeing and owning This to be the greatest and most shocking of all possible desolations. In fact, that it may become my lot to fuffer endless misery in Hell; is a cruel reflection.-That it may be my lot to lose every happiness in the eternal loss of God, is a still more cruel reflection. But that, if my wretched lot should ever be such, I (even (even I myself) should for ever, not only lose, but basely hate and blaspheme my God; oh! it is a horrible thought, at which all Nature must revolt.—It is a thought too shocking for human heart to bear. It is the abomination of desolations, the Hell of Hells.

In support of this sentiment I have no less a Voucher on my fide, than the royal. David: Who in his thanksgiving psalm for the dedication of his house has these remarkable words :- Ob Lord! thou baft brought my foul out of bell. Where by the word Hell it is plain, that he could not mean the lake of fire prepared for the damn'd, and which is therefore vulgarly called fo. For in the first place, David had never been in that lake; and therefore it was not possible, that he should be brought out of it. And fecondly, in the very same verse, he praises God separately for his deliverance from the latter in consequence of his happy escape from the former, as appears by the following words: - Thou bast faved me from among those, who go-down into the lake: as if he had faid,—" Lord! thou " haft delivered me from the Hell of guilt, " which is fuch in every fense, because es-" fentially opposed to thee; and by this " gracious deliverance thou hast freed me " from affociating forever with those, who " go-down to that lake of fire, which is " vulgarly called Hell." Though then

the Lake of fire be (familiarly speaking) one kind of Hell; the Hell which David principally speaks of and expressly calls here Hell, is of quite another and more horrible nature.

But here you will naturally ask :- If the Hell, which David in this passage expressly calls fuch, be not the same with the Lake of fire; what is it then ?- I will tell you, Christians: It is the Hell of iniquity which perpetually burns within the breafts of the miserable inhabitants of that fiery lake; a Hell more furious beyond comparison than all the sames, which can torture them from without. It is the very same Hell which the Lord speaks of in Isaiah, when by the mouth of his prophet he tells the reprobate, that their wickedness burneth as a flame , that their spirit shall devour them as a blaze, and that they themselves shall be a smoke in bis indignation and a fire that burneth all day. And that this is the genuine meaning of the prophet, we need no other evidence than his own preceding words in the xxth pfalm: Where in the figurative stile he clearly distinguishes both Hells in the same progressive order. For speaking of the souls of the reprobate, he compares them to fiery ovens and fays, that those (as it were) living ovens of spiritual fire (or mystic Hells) shall be overthrown by the almighty Judge and cast into

another fire, which is external, that is the fire of corporeal flames, or vulgar Hell. — Thou wilt put them (says he) as an oven of fire, in the time of thy appearing: the Lord in his wrath will destroy them and a fire shall

Twallow them ub.

So then the Hell prepared for the common abode of the Reprobate is only an outward Hell, that is, a lake of corporeal flames to torment them externally: Whereas the Soul itself of the final impenitent has another Hell within, a mystic Hell of the Spirit, which tortures them with inbred defolation to excess. And this last is the Hell, which David in the foregoing passages lays the chief stress upon, and which indeed deferves our chief and utmost horror. For it is a Hell within a Hell; the most desperate and abominable of all Hells; and that Evil of evils, which, comparatively speaking, suppremely deserves the name of Hell.

IN FACT, Christians, this Hell of iniquity is the Source and the Quintessence of all imaginable evils: First, because the inward desolation its inslexibility entails on the reprobate is purely spiritual, and consequently supremely tormenting: And secondly, because, but for that inslexibility, neither their inward desolation, nor their outward distress would be irremediable, as they now are. For, were the damned to cease, but for an instant to be wicked, they would cease to be wretched; and all

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their forrows would be at an end. But Stubbornness has laid such fast hold on their rebellious fouls, that their wickedness, become an inseparable attribute, is transformed into a part of their nature. And therefore as their redundant malice causes their miseries to be immense, so their incorrigible guilt renders the same miseries everlasting. This is one part of that conditional Sentence which eternal Truth long fince menaced every obstinate Sinner with by the mouth of his fervant Jeremiah - Thy wound is incurable fays the Lord :--- thy Sorrow is not to be bealed for the multitude of thy iniquity thy fins are bardenedand for thy bardened fins I bave done thefe things to thee - (that is) - " in punish-" ment of thy enormous wickedness, I have " fuffered it to harden into reprobation; " and in consequence of thy reprobation " thy woes are become incurable."

It follows therefore in course that this Hell of iniquity must needs be supremely abominable: because, for the same reason that it is the greatest of all possible evils, it is likewise an essential opposite to all that is good, and to the Supreme of all good things, which is God himself. So that if we compare the Hell of sire, in which the damned are forever constrained to abide, with the Hell of iniquity, which forever abides in the damned; the extreme evil of

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the latter will give to the former an appearance of good. Nay the evil of the former, being only an evil of equitable punishment and an adequate exertion of uncorrupted Justice, is in that sense a real good in itself, and an evil only by accident: Whereas the malignity of the latter, being an evil of pure malice, is so essentially bad, that all the omnipotence of God cannot change its nature, and make it otherwise. Again, the Hell of fire is always obeying the equitable Will of God and executing his just judgments in the chastisement of fin, without destroying the finner: While the Hell of iniquity is perpetually waging war against God, and committing the most horrible of fins in the blasphemous hatred of that unchangeable Deity, whose divine perfections it is inceffantly aiming invain to destroy. In a word the evils of local Hell, though infinite, have their measure of infinity: being all summed up in what Divines call the pain of fense, and the pain of privation, that is to fay, the sensation of infinite mifery and the forfeiture of infinite happiness. Whereas the evils of spiritual Hell, or the Hell of iniquity being in their nature diametrically contrary to God's unlimited excellence, they imply a guilt unmeasurably infinite and immensely surpaffing all the wretchedness which can be endured, either by accession of misery or X 2 exexclusion of joy; either by durance or los; even though what be suffered is eternal pain, and what be lost, is eternal selicity. And the reason is plainly this,—that it is of infinitely greater importance, whether God's supreme Goodness be forever adored, or forever insulted, than whether obstinate sinners be eternally happy, or eternally miferable.

Now these sacred Truths, if they be serioufly and duly confider'd, cannot fail to perfect in us the filial fear of God, and fill us with a just abhorrence of that iniquity, which constitutes the Hell of hells, as of the greatest of all possible evils. But then they are truths of so sublime a nature that they effentially demand all our attention, in order to conceive their force and importance; the more especially as fordid felflove is too apt to weaken our belief of them, by tempting us falfely to deem them rather objects of speculation than of practice. It cannot therefore but be highly proper to fortify your faith against so prejudicial an illufion, by enforcing their facred influence with some undeniable arguments of the practical as well as speculative kind. Nevertheless, that I may not put your patience to too severe a trial, by detaining you any longer at present; I shall now leave you for a while to digest what I have hitherto briefly observed on the subject; and will allot

allot my next discourse chiefly to the farther confideration of this very interesting point. Till then, my Friends, let it suffice you to know, to remember, and frequently to reflect, that there is a Hell of threefold defolation allotted to torment for ever all finally impenitent finners: a lake of unextinguishable fire, in which they must incessantly endure unbounded and unending mifery; and endure (which is worfe) the eternal regret of infinite happiness together with the God of all happiness irretrievably lost: nay endure (which is the worst of all) the fatal necessity of living in everlasting enmity with God, because in an everlasting state of incorrigible guilt. Remember and feriously reflect on This: and there will need no more to deter you from fin; to allure you to virtue; and to awaken or improve in you the filial fear and love of your almighty Benefactor. It is scarcely possible, that feriously and often revolving these desolations in your minds, you should have the heart to fin again. Nay I dare even affirm with St. John Chryfostom, that the Christian, who frequently contemplates Hell in this its genuine perspective, is in little danger of ever falling into it: Whereas they who view it only superficially, or make but light of it, have very little chance (if any) to efcape it. In fact, not to think and often think of Hell and its manifold diffresses, is

a woeful symptom of fatal indifference to Salvation:—to think of Hell and not to dread it, is a certain argument of infidelity, or want of sense:—but to think of Hell, to fear it, and yet to use no efforts to avoid it, or only faint ones, were the last excess

of reprobate frenzy.

An dearly beloved fellow Christians! Let us carefully shun so ruinous a madness. Let us frequently employ our thoughts in meditations on Hell, that we may thence learn to be afraid of it. Let us cherish a prudent Fear of Hell, that we may learn to avoid it. And let us study to avoid it as becomes generous Christians to do; less through a felfish fear of losing our own happiness in the loss of God, than through a filial apprehension of displeasing him. Such the Fear of God becoming free-born Children. Such is the true fountain of life, to decline from the ruin of death. And that divine fountain (if we take care to cherish it in our breasts) will plentifully water the spiritual paradise of our converted hearts; and, after enriching them with every folid virtue, will flow-back with all our affections into the abyss of almighty love, and there make us eternally exult in the blifsful experience of that fentence of the God of Truth :- In the fear of the Lord, evil is avoided. I doid of for the of

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SECOND DISCOURSE UPON HELL.

A river issued-out of the place of pleasure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the name of the third river is HIDDEKEL,

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10. 14.

Ding discourse to convince you, revered Auditors, that the mystic Hiddekel, of which my Text allegorically speaks, is a true confluence of the waters of desolation; an abysis of untold horrors, every one of which were alone sufficient to constitute a common Hell. And yet it must be owned, that of all the immense multitude of evils of every possible kind, That which (comparatively speaking) deserves the name of Hell supremely and with preference to every other, is not the lake of sire in which the damn'd are for ever doomed to abide, but the abomination of desolations, which abides in the damned, and which consists in the

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infinite iniquity of their perfisting eternally to hate and blaspheme the Holy of Holies. Accordingly we have feen, that the Royal prophet, in his twenty-ninth pfalm, gives the title of Hell only to This; whereas the vulgar Hell of fire he does not call hell. but fimply a lake .- Ob Lord, fays he! thou bast brought-forth my foul from HELL: thou hast saved me from among those, who go-down into the lake. In fact, as the reprobation of finners is in its nature an utter separation of their whole Being from God's glorious prefence, and is consequently the endless death of grace in their fouls; it necessarily follows, that this last worst of deaths (by engendering from a total corruption of the love of God the horrible foulness of blasphemous impiety within them) must necessarily fix in their hearts a Hell of fuch pre-eminence, as cannot but render any other Hell, by comparison, less deserving of that name. Infomuch that was there no other Hell to torment the wicked outwardly. Nay was at possible for them, with all their inflexible guilt about them, to be lodged even in a place of outward refreshment for others; they themselves would nevertheless continue to be superlatively wretched: and wherefore, but because every where alike the Hell of all Hells (a Hell of iniquity) would still be within them? Although then there undoubtedly is in the bowels of the earth a Hell

Hell of fire, in which the damned are forever tormented; there is in the fouls of the same unhappy wretches a far more defolate Hell, by which God is perpetually injured. That infernal flame, in which the wicked are tortured is a Hell of meer matter, but the foul of the damned, by which God is dishonoured, exhibits a Hell, which is all spirit, and therefore the worst of hells. In short, to speak with precision, the corporeal Hell is at most a current of fire, and a Hell but by halves, in comparison with the spiritual Hell, or the Hell of iniquity in the foul of condemned reprobates. For, as I now hope to convince you, This being the feat of all which is an abomination to the Lord, is Hell in the most emphatic fense of the word and the very center of defolation of Isroe econol de duw atod

Thou then oh loving Jesus, who hast mercifully deigned to shed thy precious blood to tansom our immortal souls from Hell and all its horrors! permit not any perversity of ours to frustrate thy generous purpose. But graciously help us to shun that flood of threefold desolation, by fearing it as we ought; more for the love of Thee, than out of selfish apprehension for ourselves.

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ALTHOUGH the doctrine I here advance carries conviction along with it, and must be felt by every Christian, who seriously confiders it with a lively faith, the irrefragable Truth of it will shine-forth with still more irrefistible lustre, if we approach it a little to the practice of our heavenly mafter himself, while he was yet conversant upon the earth. When our bleffed Redeemer affumed human flesh to effect the redemption of human nature; that he might do it the more fully, he graciously took upon himfelf the entire payment of both those desolate evils of vulgar Hell to which man's transgressions had made him obnoxious. namely, the pain of sense and the pain of loss. To that end therefore he resolved to bear in his own facred person a portion of both, with a bitterness equal for the time to what the damned are forever confined to: And this he effectually did, by fuffering in his bleffed body the manifold cruelties of his enemies, and by enduring in his divine foul the inexpressible anguish, which his eternal Father permitted him to feel in a temporary privation of all celestial comforts. In all which distresses, while they lasted, he might truly be faid to undergo the twofold desolation of vulgar Hell, as he himfelf declared by his servant David in those mysterious words, the dolours of Hell bave encompassed

encompassed me, but the snares of death pre-

AND indeed, on recollecting the immense thirst which our Saviour endured upon his crofs, and which was the only one of all his bodily fufferings that extorted a complaint from the divine martyr; who can help recalling to mind the intolerable drought, of which the rich man in Hell fo feelingly complained to Abraham, and which alone he implored relief for? So too, as often as we recollect the inward desolateness felt by the blessed Jesus in his state of temporary dereliction (when forfaken by his heavenly Father, he fo pathetically cried-out, -my God! my God! why bast thou forsaken me ?) is it possible for us not to reflect on the extreme diffress, which must seize the hapless objects of God's eternal wrath, when chased from his enlivening presence with that desoling sentence-depart? Well then might Jesus, after experiencing this complicated relish of the forrows of vulgar Hell, cry-out in the words of his psalmist, -the dolours of Hell have encompassed me. - And yet, not all this excess of twofold dolours, which the divine Hero voluntarily chose to bear (though equal for the time to the twin-bred defolations of local hell) could reach to destroy immediately his facred life. No. All this he deemed it necessary to undergo, that he might compleatly

pleatly repair by atonement the injuries done by man to his eternal Father's honour: All this he made his choice, that he might render man's redemption the more abundant: And therefore all this affected him, not enough to touch his precious life; but only (as it were) externally; and only with a foreign kind of anguish. Accordingly he tells us, that thus fat the dolours of Hell only encompassed bim; that is to say, they did not penetrate to the inmost recesses of his sacred foul, nor shake his godlike fortitude and patience enough to dissolve his corporal frame. It is even fo. Nothing less could work so deadly an effect, than the snares of death, and the snares of such a death as is here mysteriously implied; snares, which, preventing all created powers of relistance, took such prevailing hold of him as to crush his heroic spirits with equal grief and horror.

But what strange kind of death, you will fay, was That, which had more power than all his wounds and corporal Sufferings to oppress the Son of God?——ah Christians! it was the death of deaths, the expiring of the love of God in the hearts of confirmed Reprobates: It was the corruption of divine Charity into infamous hatred and defiance of uncreated majesty. This was the horrible kind of death, whose murderous snares gave the mortal blow to the generous heart of Jesus.

Jesus, through the envenomed tongues of the impious Jews, who at his crucifixion insulted his eternal Father's honour with facrilegious mockeries like thefe :- if be be the fon of God; let him come down from the cross: be trusted in God: let bim deliver bim now, if be lift. For what were These and other blasphemous outrages like These, levelled in the facred person of Jesus at the very God-head, but so many abominable fnares of death? what but fo many abominations of defolation, robere they ought not to be; in the holy place; in fouls created to be living fanctuaries of the Holy-Ghoft? where is the wonder therefore, that the enormity of These should (as they did) fire the heavenly Hero's foul with fuch indignation as (preventing all his created faculties of refiftance) provoked him to withdraw his precious breath the fooner, not to continue a passive witness to them? or that the fight of fuch abominable corruption of divine charity in fouls created to cherish its holy flame, should be more intolerable to that Lord of all charity, than all his personal fufferings; and make him cry-out by the mouth of his prophet, the Snares of death bave prevented me? -- nousagibai

In reality the immense Wisdom of our blessed Redeemer made an infinite difference between the double desolations resulting from the pains of sense and the pains of

privation,

privation, which comprise all the complicated evils of local Hell; and the defolation inseparable from that iniquity, which constitutes the Hell of Hells and the abomination of defolation. Infomuch that, though his love for mankind made him submit to a similitude of the two former ones; his Justice made the latter insupportable to him. The former therefore could only as it were outwardly befiege his facred life; but the latter, like a furious unexpected storm which prevents all refistance, poured-in upon his tender breast such an inundation of horror, as forced human fortitude itself to bend beneath the shock. And this is the Storm he complains of, when, by the tongue of his pfalmist, he fays, I came into the midst of the deep, and a tempest overwhelmed me. Accordingly we see, that, although neither the martyrdom of his bleffed body during his bitter passion, nor the depression of his sacred spirit in his miraculous dereliction, put an end to his mortal existence, that blasphemous taunt, let us see if Elias come and take bim down, was no sooner uttered, than the thitherto meek and patient Jesus breathedout his spirit with these express accents of holy indignation:—it is consummate, it is finished.—ah yes, lovely Saviour! finished indeed was the fweet excess of thy unparallelled goodness, love and patience. finished the last excess of reprobate iniquity,-

quity, - finished the utmost overflow of

guilty defolation.

SUCH, my revered Auditors, is the horrible nature of that Abyss of threefold desolation denominated Hell: the Third of the four important Heads of religious Contemplation, designed to strengthen the holy stream of filial fear of God within us. And the Name of the third River (says Moses) is Hiddekel, that is, a sharp and uncouth Sound.

THAT it is (adds the facred Historian) which goes against the East of Assyria. For the clear understanding of which, it is proper to acquaint you, that by the East is often meant the fource of light, or the throne of God, and fometimes almighty majesty itfelf; as by the word Assyria is implied a land of prisoners, or a land of confinement. And indeed the unhappy damned may truly be faid in that sense, to move continually against the East: their impotent rage being constantly levelled at God, the sovereign fource of light and life. Too truly are they themselves eternal prisoners in a land of the most desolate confinement. For, oh my God! what other confinement can there be imagined fo emphatically defolate as That of wretches forever confined to fuffer All that is lamentable; to forfeit All that is defirable; and to hate All that is lovely and adorable?

I PRESUME therefore, my beloved, that by this time you cannot but clearly perceive, that of the three grand desolations, we have hitherto considered as making-up the Hell of finally impenitent finners, the last is beyond all comparison the most horrible of the three: Since the two first, though inexpressibly great, are grievous only to ourselves; whereas the third is injurious to the very being of our almighty Creator. For this very reason then, if we truly love God; our abhorrence of eternally injuring him will exceed (in the same proportion as God exceeds us, that is infinitely) every dread of being eternally punished by him. For the fear of Hell barely as an evil of our own, were a fordid dread fit only for the abject fouls of absolute slaves: Whereas the fear of Hell worthy to actuate the breasts of free-born Christians, is a holy fear which chiefly arises from the confideration of its being a state of injurious rebellion against God. And therefore this is the heroic fear I wish you to cultivate above all; as you certainly will do, if you feriously and affiduously consider the excellence of it. This however will best appear, by fetting it in contrast with its contrary, which is an heroic yearning after heaven. I shall therefore, make here a short, but instructive digression for the sake of comparing them together. THE

THE Royal Prophet made one fele petition to God, because it seems he had but one fond defire to gratify. One thing I have asked of our Lord, fays he: That I will purfue. Now That was (as he himself tells us) the endless possession of heaven: that I may dwell in the bouse of the Lord all the days of my life, or as the Divines interpret it, that I may dwell eternally in his celestial abode. And what was the prophet's principal aim in this his favourite request? Was it, perhaps, purely with a view to obtain a life of endless ease, in exchange for the life he had endured of perpetual trouble and care? Yes (to judge by general rules) one should be tempted to think fo. But let us leave the holy monarch to answer for himfelf. Why then, fays he:- "My main defign " in this earnest petition is, that I may be " bold the delight of the Lord." Heroic difinterestednes! David was less desirous of heaven for the fake of his own beatitude, than for the fake of the beatitude of his divine Benefactor. He was not fo follicitous to enjoy delight himself, as to behold the delight of the Lord; or in other words, " to fee the " Lord in all his delight?" that I may behold. fays he, the delight of the Lord. Words, which, when they are compared with his other manifold protestations of the same kind, can have no meaning more natural than This :- " Lord, when I cover thy hea-

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"ven, it is much more for thy fake than " for my own. For, what is aught in hea-" ven to me? or what have I defired of " Thee on earth, but Thee thyself? Thou " knowest well, that as the stag bankers after fountains of water, not for the sake of the channel in which they flow, but out of pure love of the flood itself, even " So does my Soul yearn after Thee, my God; " less for the bleffings I myself may enjoy in thy celeftial kingdom, than for the ex-" static pleasure of beholding Thee in the " fulness of thy bliss. In a word, that I " may behold the delight of my Lord." Such was the noble fentiment of David; and fuch is That of all, whose desire of heaven is truly heroic: that is an eagerness to possessit, not so much for their own eternal benefit as for the almighty's everlasting glory. So likewise, for our christian fear of Hell to be heroic, we must dread it less because there we should be forever wretched ourselves, than because there our divine Benefactor would be forever offended.

To persuade you then, dear Christians, to cultivate this heroic fear of Hell, what need I add more, than that it will be an effectual means to preserve you forever from that horrid Abys; And That for this plain reason—A fear of Hell meerly because it is grievous to us creatures, is the sole effect of a fordid self-love: Whereas a fear of Hell

as of a State injurious to our great and good Creator, is an effect of pure love of God. And therefore as They, who dread Hell from self-love alone, are unworthy to escape it, and (I fear) will not; so They, who fear it chiefly for the pure love of God, are in no danger of being condemned to it.

In the two and thirtieth chapter of Exodus we find, that when God was on the point of destroying the Ifraelites in the defart, to divert Moses from interceding for their pardon, he promised to turn the destruction of that rebellious people to the advantage and personal emolument of the prophet himself and of His posterity. Leave me, says the Lord, that my fury may be incensed against them; and that I may destroy them. And as for thyself, be perfectly easy: for I will make Thee into a great people. Now, to judge by the fordid felfishness of the bulk of mankind, who would not expect to find Mofes (in fight of fuch personal advantages) compleatly refigned to the impending ruin of the Jews? the more especially as God's vengeance would have been perfectly just and his own acquiescence thoroughly innocent? - But no. - Mofes was of no fuch mercenary stamp. He loved God for what God is, and not for what God bas: And therefore regardless of Self, he was anxious for nothing but what he confidered as the interest of God. He ima-Z 2 dies spined

gined that God's enemies might make his just resentment an impious pretext for decrying his goodness and blaspheming his facred name: And That was more than enough to make him generously reject every advantage proffered to himfelf, which might be followed by an injury to his beloved Maker. In fhort in the prophet's equitable scale, the least irreverence to God was an infinitely heavier evil, than the worst of evils which could light upon Moses. Wherefore he sather wished to be himself struck out of the very book of life and funk to his native nothing, than that God's holy name should be blasphemed. " Why, oh Lord (he cries) " is thy fury incensed against thy people? ab ! " I befeech thee, let not the Egyptians fay of " Thee-He bath cunningly led them forth, " that he might flay them in the mountains and destroy them from the earth.—EITHER " FORGIVE THEM THIS TRESPASS, OR " BLOT ME OUT OF THE BOOK, WHICH "THOU HAST WRITTEN." Noble Sentiment indeed! This is truly treating God like God. This is truly expressing in practice what St. Ambrose so happily expressed in thought when he observed, that " He who chuses God for his portion, cares " for nothing but God."

To bring then this weighty Truth home to our prefent subject,—By the same rule that They, who take God for their eternal share, can cover nothing but God, it follows

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naturally that They, whose sovereign only wish is God himself, cannot possibly miss of him for their everlafting portion. For if we recollect the infinite Goodness of that all-generous Being; how is it possible to conceive, that They, who dread God's dishonour more than their own ruin, and prize their own existence less than the greatness of God. should be deprived of the God of all greatness? If to reward Moses for his disinterested love, the almighty generously extended his mercy to a whole rebellious nation; can it be thought that He, who is no excepter of persons, will withhold his generosity from any of Those, who love him with real difinterestedness? No: it is absolutely imposfible. Confequently, it must be equally impossible, that any one should be eternally loft, who stands in fear of Hell more out of abhorrence of the injury there done to God, than out of dread of the evils with which it threatens himself. In other words, They, who fear less a Hell of wretchedness to themselves than a Hell of rebellion against God, cannot be in any danger of lofing that God, whose honour they have so much at heart. Of this we have a practical proof in the third Book of Kings, dans of mil

THE Courage of the Prophet Elias stands there upon record, and his Fortitude afferted beyond the power of calling it in question. Nevertheless we find even there,

that once on a time his Valour was overfet by the bare wrath of a woman. Jezabel but threatens him; and lo! he is feized with a panic and feeks his fafety in running away. To what then can we, in a man of his tried constancy, impute a flight in all appearance so pufillanimous? Did it proceed from an unmanly fear of death? For certain it did not. So little was he afraid of dying, that he no fooner got out of the female monster's reach, than he defired to die. It sufficeth Lord, he cries, take my foul: for I am not better than my fathers were. He desired, I say to die : but then he was not willing to die by the impious hands of Jezabel. The Wretch (he knew) could not effect her murderous purpose upon himself, without doing a fresh infult to God in the person of his prophet. The thought therefore of a death, by which he himself must become a means (though an innocent one). of lese majesty divine was what feized his pious foul with irrefiftible horror and urged him to so precipitate a flight. But once he was no longer in danger of that abominable circumstance; the fame godly principles, which had caused him to turn his back upon death, now made him defirous to encounter it. He was fensible, that, though by his timely escape he had hindered a sacrilegious insult being publickly offered to God in the effectual

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fectual murder of His minister, nothing less than his own death could put an end to the private indignity still aimed against that aweful Being in 'Jezabel's murderous wishes. And therefore displeased with a life, which he now only confidered as infidious to the honour of its supreme Author, he petitioned to refign it. It sufficeth, Lord: take my foul, he cries. As if he had faid : " Lord ! I " have now lived long enough, fince I have " lived to know and love Thee. Too much " it is to live still longer, to fee thee in-" infulted, and infulted on my account, or "through my means. Oh! take my foul " then, and rid me of a life too odious to " endure, when made an incentive to blaf-

" pheme thy facred name."

On the uncommon magnanimity! What! Elias amidst incessant sufferings and perils is fo insensible to all that regards himself, that he loaths alike to die or to live, but on condition that God's honour be unviolated? Such a man, it must be owned is truly fit to live. And it can be no matter of wonder that the Almighty, to recompense his generous contempt of life, fnatched him from the earth in a car of etherial fire, and placed him above the reach of death, till death itself be on the point of its destruction. Here, oh Christians, is a practical proof of the little (the nothing) they lose or risk, who postpone their own concerns to those of their creator.

creator. The Prophet preferred God's temporal glory to his own: And therefore God rewarded him with a lasting exemption from the general tribute of temporal death. Consequently it cannot, without an injury to God, be doubted, that He will equally exempt from eternal death every Christian, who prefers his maker's immortal interests to his own. Hence it is clear to a demonstration, that They, who fear Hell more from a generous abhorrence of the infults there levelled at God than from a felfish dread of the miseries which may there befall themselves, must be safe from that abyss of evils, while they persevere in the same disinterested disposition: Because they must be dear to the God of all generofity, whom they love with fuch generous preference to themfelves. For God is too good and great to be ever out-done or even equalled in generofity by his creatures : Who, if they do but make the trial, are fure for all eternity to feel bow fivest be is to All, who truly love bim and fear himm on sd nes it bank .svi

On Souls of Christ's own purchase! Be this then henceforth your first and greatest Fear of Hell. To attain to which you need only cultivate a truly filial fear of God within you. If once you love him, as Children ought to do (not so much for what he has, as for what he is your gracious heavenly parent) and seriously withal resect how infinitely

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finitely he deserves, that you should always love him thus; your every other dread will naturally be absorbed in the terrible reflection, that it is still possible, that You yourselves may fink to the wretched state of never ceasing to blaspheme him. And that dreadful thought alone, by keeping you incessantly on your guard against sin, will effectually secure you from everlasting deso-lation.

As often therefore, as you are tempted to any finful action word or thought, You cannot well, I imagine, make use of any antidote more powerful than This :- Afk (every one) of your own foul this plain and ferious question-" Canst thou, my foul, resolve to run the risk of existing forever " in a state of blasphemous enmity against " the lovely Jesus, who loved thee to the " fweet excess of dying for thee? If thou " canst; ah I wretch! sin on: For thou " hast little more to dread. Already thou " art wedded to perdition's heaviest curse, the last excess of desolation, which Hell " itself affords.—But if (my heart!) thou happily thrinkest at the horrid thought; oh! shun as thou wouldst, and more than " thou wouldst, a burning lake of fire, this " evil deed to which thou art tempted; " and which (if thou yield to the tempta-" tion) may probably entail upon thee the infinite iniquity of never cealing to blaf-" pheme asily

"factor." Make This (I fay) your fovereign antidote against temptation. For if This will not blunt the edge of your sinful inclination; I know of nothing else that will. At least I speak from what I feel

myself.

IF I confidered God as a capriciously despotic Monarch, implacably severe to all his fubjects, except a few capriciously felected favourites, and only lavish of his benefits to These; I apprehend that the double desolation of the Reprobate from infinite mifery endured and from unbounded happiness forfeited, would neither deter me from fin, nor spur me on to virtue. For, though I could attempt the most apparent impossibilities from principles of love and of gratitude; I could never be frighted or allured to any thing from slavish fears, or felfish expectations. But, when I consider that my God is infinitely lovely in himfelf:---that He is my fond and generous parent :--- that He was the first to love Me, and to love me out of nothing into the something I now am; nay to the ineffably gracious extreme of dying for me: that spite of all My disgustful ill qualities, He still loves me on; and This without any advantage to himself: --- how can I have a foul and not love him to excess? and not difdain every other motive for loving him,

than his own divine excellence? how must I not repine, that I never can love him so much as he deserves to be loved? how not blush and grieve, that (wretch as I am!) I do not even love him so much as I may and ought? And loving him with these sentiments, must I not tremble at the thought of offending him? and tremble purely for his sake?

DEAR loving lovely Lord! when we reflect on This; how must not our souls be all pure silial fear of thee! how must we not naturally prefer innumerable deaths to deadly Guilt; less on account of the endless miferies and losses That exposes us to, than on account of the infinite iniquity with which (if damned) we should for ever injure Thee! For, who that thinks at all, but must think, that this one single circumstance is the Hell of hells, the Abomination of desolations; in comparison of which every other hell without it were a kind of paradise?

What think you then, beloved Christians? is it not worth our while, to fix each day we live one serious thought on Hell? If we grudge doing This; can we deserve to escape it? What would the unhappy creatures, who are there already, now give, that they had done so while in time! how do they probably now curse in vain their past neglect of doing so! how justly may they not henceforth every one cry-out (al-A a 2 though

though, alas, too late) -- "Wretch that I " was! why did I not, while I had the time, think feriously on Hell, and duly weigh the importance of it before I rath-" ly exposed myself to all its desolations! " One of those hours I formerly fet fo light " by, if thus employed, would have fuf-" ficed to fave me from this horrible abyls " for ever. Oh time! past time, at once " too little and too great! how much too " little was it not to be fquandered at fo " mad a rate! how much too abundant " for salvation, not to leave me without " excuse! little as it was, it was abun-" dantly sufficient towards purchasing eteron al life: Yet have I lavished it all to " purchase endless misery. Oh precious " months and days and hours! Too pre-" cious minutes loft, and never more to be " retrieved! Little did I think, that I should " ever be constrained to hanker after them : " and That fo bitterly; and That fo un-" profitably; and That fo eternally."-Say then, my dearly beloved friends : Must not this fingle self-condemning Retrospection of the Damned for all eternity, be of itself (without farther addition) a sufficient Hell? Doubtles it must be

ADD then to this Hell of incessant selfreproach an excess of desolation from infinite misery incessantly endured amidst a lake of supernatural

Supernatural fire, forever tormenting them Within, without, in every manner and on every fide. Add to both an excess of fill greater desolation from infinite happiness and the God of all happiness forever forfeited. - Add to the whole the Abomination of desolation eternally committed in the infinite iniquity, with which the Reprobate inflexibly perfift in hating and blafphe-ming the fovereign, uncreated Source of all Goodness. - Join all these Hells in one: Consider them well in this collective point of view: And then (if you can) put-off for an instant the amendment of your lives. Then (if you can) continue yet a while your evil courses. In a word, then (if you can) refolve to run the rifk of being forever lodged in Hell. But oh the horrid, desperate refolution! what human mind and heart can bear the cruel thought, the uncouth Sound?

AND YET, heaven grant it be not fadly true, that (spite of all I have said, and spite of all which can be said to caution Sinners against that dread Abyss of Evils) too many Christians are still perversely unresolved to leave-off drinking, swearing, lying, fraud and over-reaching; still unresolved to conquer their Pride, their Lusts, their Envy and detracting Malice; still unresolved to break-off That criminal engagement, acquaintance, or occasion; to renounce That lurking hatred and revenge, or to relinquish That wicked, sa-

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vourite project: and consequently resolved to hazard a perpetual Abode in Hell !---But gracious heaven !---what a madness must it be, to hazard damnation for fo small a gain as this poor starveling world can yield !--- What ! for fo paltry a conquest (could we acquire it) as the whole Globe would be, to venture upon Hell! nay three Hells in one! Forbid it (all-bounteous Jesus!) in thy unwearied mercy; and save us from so ruinous a frenzy. Assist us to remember our last important Things, and This the dreadfulest of all. That remembring This, we may never dare to offend thee again :- That by our constant assiduity in founding the horrible depths of This, we may draw thence perpetual recruits of Grace and Virtue to strengthen our filial fear of Thee; and thereby enable that fountain of life (after watering abundantly the spiritual paradise of our converted hearts) to flow-back into the abyss of thy divine Love, and there drown itself and all our fouls affections in a flood of unbounded Blifs: Which shall make us forever experience along with the Prophet, how great is the multitude of sweetness, which Thou hast fecretly reserved for those, who truly fear and love thee.

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IN TWO DISCOURSES UPON HEAVEN. clary well a just house of fin ; ic

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A river issued-out of the place of pleafure, to water paradife; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the fourth river is EUPHRATES.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10. 14.

parent alvis, whence OURAGE, my beloved Christians! lift-up your minds, and let your hearts exult. The hour is come to make you fome amends for all the terrors I have caused you: And now we may address our allgracious Benefactor with the plalmifts words, and fay :- Thanks to thy mercy, Lord, we bave passed through fire and water; and thou halt led us forth in refreshment. Thus far, the Fear of the Lord, that fountain of life (which was fent-forth from the abyss of God's uncreated love, to water the spiritual the Fates of Ethad life. And the

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paradife of our hearts) has led us in spirit through the terrifying channels of death, judgment and bell. Before, it successively led us through the perilous waters of contradiction and restitution and through the fiery ftream of desolation, to sow in sorrow the falutary feed of circumspection. And now, when (by their means) it has I bope fortified our piety with a just horror of sin; it invites us back, with the gladdening fheathes of a well grounded hope, to pour all our affections into that place of eternal pleasure, whence it first sallied-forth : that (replaced in God, our natural center) we may flow at liberty in a sea of unbounded joys. So true are the words of Ecclefiaftes : - Rivers return to the fea whence they iffue-out, that they may flow-back again.

God then is the parent abys, whence the enlivening stream of religious Fear springs into our soul? Yes, Christians, he is: And if we strive not against the beneficent tide of that sacred stream; its reverting course will finally bear us back directly to God, through the midst of his Heaven; that boundless stood of unspeakable Joys, which is the last in order, of the four great Heads, or Rivers of Eternity significant well alluded to in my Text. In other words, it is the mystic River, which St. John in the Revelations allegorically describes as made-up of the Waters of Eternal life. And this fourth

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fourth River (fays the divine historian) is EUPHRATES; which fignifies in our language a thriving, fruitful stream. This then is the fertile flood of folid joys, which will put the defired period to your worldly navigation; if you but faithfully perfift in steering your present course with christian circumspection. Take heart then, my beloved. What, though incessant tempests harrass you amidst the rugged sea of this mortal life? have patience till the storm blow-over. Be steady (I conjure) yet a little longer: And Heaven is your own. Be cheared, says David :- Sing a new song unto the Lord: For he will give joy and gladness to your bearts; and the bones, which are bumbled, shall rejoice.

AND YET on reflection (as the prophet observes) how shall we sing unto the Lord in à foreign land? Exiles as we are from our paternal home, amidst a perfidious Babylon of fin and finful occasions; what language can we use but That of weeping eyes. With Heaven before us and still out of our reach; with Ourselves out of Heaven and in danger of lofing it; what fongs can befit us, but lamentations and fighs? Dear brethren! That Heaven is still out of our reach, is a dismal reflection, without doubt: But oh! how much more dismal must not our case be, if that Heaven be alike out of our thoughts? That we are still in danger of losing Heaven, deferves all our tears. But, alas! what tears can

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fuffice to bewail our misfortune; if that very. danger scarcely alarms us! Yet is it too common a case with the Christians of this degenerate age: Who, leaving their licentious appetites at full liberty to lord it over their reafon, fuffer an empty world to rob Heaven of their affections; and live in that world, as if there really were no Heaven; or as if at least, they coveted all their Heaven to be made-up of earth. Therefore it is, that their faith being too weak and their affections too fleshly to elevate their spirits to that bleffed abode, in order to contemplate its enchanting beauty; Heaven, with all its Charms, is very little thought-on by modern Christians; and still less hankeredafter.

WHILE then we remain in this wretched condition, too encumbered with earth for lifting our minds to reconnoitre in thought that mansion of bliss; we never can form any tolerable idea of its transcending worth: at least never, unless the Almighty vouchfafe to make that very Heaven floop-down to us. But can reptiles like us, without prefumptuous abfurdity, ever hope for fuch indulgence from God? Doubtles we may; if we turn but to him with all our hearts. For, what is there of good and great, which we may not hope to obtain of that all-bounteous Lord; if we ask it as we ought? Whenever therefore I recollect with

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with the pfalmist, that God has already done as much; that long fince he boweddown his Heaven in favour of his creatures; I cannot despair of his stooping it again to us. Rather, methinks, I am all hope: And turning my thoughts to the mystic Vision recorded in the book of Revelations, I can behold in fancy the Heavens bowingdown from Heaven itself. That is, I can figure to my self the new Jerusalem descending once more from God out of Heaven. In a word, I can form to my mind the River of the waters of eternal life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb and streaming-down upon us (as formerly upon St. John) to overflow our fouls with spiritual joy. With speed then let us prepare to meet the facred Tide. Towards That henceforth let all our aims and wishes be directed, For there and only there our labours will be recompensed, our yearnings gratified, and all our Fears and Cares removed.

HEAVEN is the word then, my dearly beloved Brethren. Heaven is the Goal I now invite you all to strive for. Yes, Nothing less than Heaven, that immense kingdom of bliss which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world, is the Subject, which now claims your Attention. If the considerations of death, judgment, and bell have hitherto filled your minds with

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gloomy apprehensions; a serious Contemiplation of Heaven is capable of making you ample amends by shewing you a prospect of those joys, which when possest will surpass your most fanguine expectations. It must indeed be owned, that it is not without cause that you start at the thought of those three final evils. For the First of them is a dangerous Assemblage of the mystic waters of contradiction; the Second a hazardous concurrence of the figurative waters of restitution; and the Third an eternal confluence of the thrice bitter waters of desolation. And therefore are they truly worthy of all your abhorrence. But frightful as they are, they are not more terrifying than Heaven is inviting. However justly they deferve all your Terrors, Heaven full as justly deserves all your emulation and yearnings. For it is a permanent Abysi of the precious waters of eternal life: a flood of unbounded happiness; and the only happiness worth possessing: Because (as I now purpose to shew you) its Joys are universal, and its Duration everlasting.

HAIL heavenly city! celestial river hail!
Oh! stoop-down to the earth once more, and overslow our souls with thy sorever satiating, never palling sweets: That, nauseating all which savours of the world, its salse intoxicating pleasures may vitiate our appetites no more, nor wean or weaken

weaken our hankerings after Thee. And Thou, O Lamb of God, whose presence there beatifies the whole! vouchfase to draw us thither after Thee with such victorious force, that we may henceforth relish no repose till we rest in Thee.

EXPECT me not, revered Auditors, to flatter your fenfes, by amufing your fancy with a meer figurative Heaven; fuch as the Angel presented to the imagination of St. John: an allegoric City paved with jasper, enclosed with walls of gold, adorned with gates of pearl, and built on precious stones; with here a metaphoric river divided thro' its spacious streets, adorned with temples, palaces and thrones, enriched with everbearing trees of twelve-fold growths of fruit; and there a fun in one perpetual meridian: that is, the unspotted Lamb's resplendent majesty, darting around incessant beams of glory; to gild the boundless hemisphere with universal day. No, no. For, though these mystic figures have their mystic meanings, yet in the letter they are no more than founds. And what idea of celeftial joys can earthly founds convey? Oh mansion of untold delights! if thou couldst be described by earthly tongue or pencil; thou wouldst no more be Heaven. And therefore it is, that the divine historian Moses, in his account of the creation, declines the fruitless

fruitless attempt with a prudence well worthy of notice. For after fetting-out with telling us, that in the beginning God created Heaven and earth, he forbears to fay more of the former; and hastens to give us some account of the latter :- The earth (fays he) was without form and void. The earth, he knew, was of easy detail: And therefore after informing us of its original non-existence, he ventured to acquaint us with the reduction of the whole into existence and of its parts into order. But as for Heaven; conscious of his essential insufficiency for the talk, he presumes not to disparage its unparalleled excellence by any attempt to describe what it is; but contents himself with barely naming it. And in truth its Name alone is its best panegyric: A Name, which bids equal defiance to description and praise. For so rich, so immense and so ineffable a treasure of bliss is possessed in that charming abode; that, though Mofes be allowed to enjoy it, neither Moses, with all the familiarity God admitted him to, no nor millions of Moseses could ever reach to express its inestimable worth.

WHAT is to be done then, Christians?— Shall I disappoint your favourite wishes, by desisting from the arduous task? No. That were a breach of the promise I have made you, and a disappointment of the comfort you have a right to expect at my hands.

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After lowering your spirits, for so long a time, with a view of the manifold evils attending on vice, it is but just that I attempt to raise them again with a prospect of the ample rewards, which will crown your perseverance in virtue. Still, to do This with any success; it will behave us to use our utmost efforts to renounce our sensual faculties for the time; and to strip our ideas of Heaven (as much as possible) of all that is

earthly.

Away therefore with those paltry injurious colours in which (I dare fay) Heaven has been more than once rather daubed-over than painted to your deluded imaginations. Daubings more fit to flatter your passions, than to ennoble your fentiments; fitter to amuse and deceive, than to instruct or amend you. Away with your chimerical eternal springs adorned with ever fragrant flowers: your perpetual autumns enriched with neverfading fruits: your spacious gardens, smiling prospects, and refreshing Zephyrs: your gold and gems; and musics, feasts and entertainments in Heaven. All these are but vapour-like fumes of dreaming piety; if not rather unhallowed freaks of tenfual fanaticism. They may indeed (as a venerable author has remarked) make-up a tolerable carnal Heaven, to flatter Libertines; but never can compose a Heaven to satisfy or recompense the Righteous. All these

are ideas within the power of description i and things which by the painter, orator and poet often are, and oftener may be, magnified. Whereas those inundations of bliss which overflow the heavenly Jerusalem are ineffably mysterious Words, which man is not allowed to utter. And how indeed should he; when St. Paul, after having a tafte of them, was constrained to declare, that eye bath not feen, ear bath not beard, nor bath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the good things, which God bath prepared for those who love him. In fact, too beggarly is the world and too empty of worth to afford any likeness to that blessed abode, but what is fictitious. And therefore, to avoid being grossly deceived in our notions of its immense beatitude, we have no other safe and certain means than to collect together, as well as we can, some of those precious diftillations from it, which the Almighty's Goodness has from time to time vouchfafed to let fall on the earth, to recreate therewith and fortify his faithful fervants amidst their rudest struggles: That from those frugal drops, from those still scanty famples of distant Heaven, we may in some degree be enabled to furmife what a Heaven actually present, what a Heaven in possession must be :- just as of old the Israelites in the defart guessed at the redundant richness of the land of promise by a single cluster of the

the grapes; which their Spies brought back with them, when they returned from re-

connoitring that Country.

IT were greatly to be wished, my beloved, that the Saints had been a little less humble in this life, a little less referved of communicating to us the spiritual unctions, the divine confolations, the liquifying foretastes and melting relishes of Heaven, with which their celeftial parent so often and so fweetly regaled and fortified their amorous fouls upon earth; foftened their toils; wiped+ off their fweats; and fondly helped them to triumph over all the powers of earthly pain and pleasure. For oh! were Those but fully understood; what Multitudes would follow the standard of virtue and piety, who now, for a miserable hire most wretchedly paid by an ungrateful perfidious world, labour, fight, and perish under the banners of vice and folly! How many, who now unadvisedly cling to the creature, would then infeparably adhere to their all-great, all-wife, all-bounteous Creator! But wherefore do I thus complain? Is it not happily true, that (what through the dictates of an humble spirit) their tongues have concealed, the divine Beneficence has nevertheless caused to be frequently revealed; fometimes in the exstatic rapture of their senses; other times in their invulnerable fortitude of body as well as spirits; and others

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others again in an unufual radiance and majesty of aspect? View Moses after barely beholding the back part of God, that is to fay, only a shadow of his clouded greatness, only a figure of his intrinfic glory: And what refiftless beams of splendour brighten all his visage from a simple distillation of the heavenly joy dript (if I may use the term) into his pious breast on that occasion! Transport your Thoughts to Babylon, and eye the fiery furnace kindled there; fo fierce on the outfide, so raging all around; that it conveys immediate death to certain daring mortals, who approach it only at a moderate distance: And yet is it so very gentle within, that it reaches not to finge fo much as the garments; no, nor a fingle hair of the head of three illustrious youths who are walking in the midft of it as unconcerned, as if in a garden of delights. Ah! whence (think you) were derived the rapturous joys they there appeared fo full of? Whence All their fongs of jubilee? and whence the uncommon fplendour, which (diffused throughout their blessed frames) outshone the fire around them ?-Whence, (I say again) but from a sacred secret dewfall of heavenly blifs filtered (as it were) by God's all-bounteous hand into their faithful Souls, to strengthen and refresh them amidst their fiery trial? It per usual radio planted bree Central as flow as voud to compact

HAD you existed at the same time with Christ's Apostles, and chanced to meet them when expelled from the unhallowed council of high priefts, where they had just before been foorned and foourged; and whence they were returning loaded with unmerited abuse and stripes; instead of seeing them (as might have been expected) mournful and groaning under their injurious treatment, you would have feen them not barely serene, but shewing in their aspect all the figns of inward exultation usual to perfons newly raifed to fome uncommon dignity or wealth, and (fays the facred history) rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer ignominy for the name of Jesus. Now whence, I beseech you, could they, amidst their fufferings, draw this visible transport of unufual joy (feemingly fo incompatible with their actual fituation) but from a fecret foretaste of the Joys above?

LOOK through the annals of Christianity! and there you will find at almost every step innumerable instances of holy persons of every sex and age and state, from the palace to the cottage, to confirm this truth. There you will meet with numerous examples of princes, peasants; people young and old; grey-headed men, unbearded striplings; grave matrons and gay young virgins, embracing by choice a life of labour, hunger, nudity, contempt, op-

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pression, want and all those mortifying circumstances, which the world and its adherents shun with disdain and horror: And (which is aftonishing) you will find them rejoicing therein, triumphing therein, and (as if unable to contain the excess of inward pleasure they conceive therein) often hurried in some degree out of themselves with exstasies of spiritual sweetness. Now, what do you suppose could work such wondrous effects, fuch powerful exertions of more than human fortitude in merely human frames? What could produce fuch overflowing tides of spiritual gladness in fleshly bosoms amidst the most dejecting circumstances? Combine the experienced psalmist's sayings together; and Those with His and many another Saint's deportment: And you may eafily unveil the Mystery. " So empty (methinks I hear him " fay) fo impotent is the world to fatiate " the heart of man, that my foul has refused " all consolation from it. But, when I be-" came mindful of God and his ineffable plea-" fures; oh! then I was ravished with delight. "Yes, I was feized with fuch overpowering " joy; that my spirit fainted with the sweet " excefs." Oh my revered Christians then! if one fingle drop (as we may fay) of spiritual comfort thus distilled from distant Heaven can throw the vast capacious heart of man into the like convulsions of redundant joy:-If it can overpower the human spirits

rits with such heart-felt transports, that a David, with all his fortitude and supernatural vigour, was not able to recollect the sweetness- of it without fainting with ideal pleasure. If it can force the utmost energy of human eloquence to confess thro' the mouth of St. Paul, that its sweet effects are not to be described but with ineffable words, which Man is not allowed to utter: oh what will the case be, when a whole Heaven breaking-down its floodgates shall pour on the foul the mighty torrent of its riches! What will the case be (oh my God!) when, as thy pfalmift fays, thy Elect will be inebriated (made drunk as it were) with the pienty of thy house?-What, I fay once more, when no longer a distant Heaven will drip into the soul a few and those but feeble relishes of its transcendent delights, but the whole ravished foul shall be immerfed in a boundless flood of bliss amidst that Heaven possessed?

SAY, holy martyrs! noble affertors of the cause of God! Thou blest Bartholomew not barely scalped but slead alive from head to foot! Thou favorite disciple immersed in servent oil! Thou valorous Stephen amidst a shower of stones! Thou too victorious Lawrence on thy siery gridiron! Ye, glorious Agnes, Katherine, Agatha and Lucy amidst your slames and wheels and racks! Say christian champions of every

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nation sex and age!— Has this poor paltry globe of parti-coloured clay any sweets to match with Those, which, copiously distilling from the joys of Heaven into your faithful souls, helped you to extract delight from your acutest torments? — I know not what impression the heroic unconcern and gaiety of those facred Martyrs amidst their tortures might make on the hearts of other Christians. But I know they make a very

deep one on my own.

I HAVE frequently read (in the Rolls of primitive christianity) of venerable old men finging-forth hymns of divine praise in the midst of the most ardent flames; of very infants gayly exulting in the bitterest torments; of tender virgins despising the cruelest anguish and challenging their tyrant to augment his fury. I have even read in the Second of Maccabees, and have bathed with tears the facred page while my entranced imagination seemed to behold, the flupendous combat or triumph (I know not which to call it) of Seven noble brethren and their valiant mother, all vying to fupport the cause of uncreated Majesty. There buried in contemplative reverence I have beheld them conducted to the throne of Antiochus and commanded to eat of the polluted offerings made to false Gods, in contempt of the True One : When the elder Six with more than manly fortitude (bidding

ding defiance to the impious monarch's will and to all the tortures with which he strove to enforce it) suffered themselves to be dismembered, torn piece-meal, fried alive; and still exulted: Still (heartening oneanother to die manfully) looked with vietorious fcorn upon their tyrant; smiled upon their executioners and their instruments of anguish; and finally expired with the praises of God on their lips, and raptures of holy joy in their hearts. There too have I mentally feen the Youngest of those youthful heroes nobly infult and triumph over the ruder efforts of half-disarmed barbarity; while courted, careffed, and baited, with foothing promifes of wealth and grandeur to give-up the cause of piety, and thus to obtain a life of affluence and fplendour instead of all the excruciating tortures of his brethren, which were to be renewed in him with treble fierceness, in case of his refusal. And still, methinks, I fee this prodigy of valour (as heretofore) magnanimoully spurn at the impious exchange, and with intrepid gaiety fustain the utmost efforts of exasperated cruelty rather than except the false indulgence proffered. And oh the miracle of a mother! how have I not been all admiration, while I beheld the illustrious matron greedily devouring every torture of her glorious Offspring; and still bravely exhorting them to fuffer on with courage

courage to the last: More sollicitous to give them back to God, at the expence of appropriating all their present pangs, than the formerly had been to be released from a mother's throws, by bringing them into the world. Oh truly wondrous mother! or (as the facred text expresses it) Mother beyond all measure marvellous I who in one day's space beheld her seven children most cruelly butchered in her presence; and bore the fight with a heart full of valour. She bare it, with a good heart (fays the holy writer) because of the hope she had in God. And so truly good was the heart she bore it with, that the gloriously crown'd the seven-fold martyrdom her children's slaughter had wrought in her bowels with the butchery fhe afterwards endured in her limbs; and thus nobly confirmed the piety of her maternal exhortations with her unshaken constancy in the practice of filial fear and religious love of God.

Now in fight of such exalted bravery, what must not the emotions be of every christian heart? will not every one be disposed to-cry out with transport: Oh! from Heaven, doubtless from Heaven there must have fallen into the bosom of those facred heroes, some drop of its pain-defying bliss, to season such excruciating torments, and render such extremes of agony thus precious to the sense. "Yes, (methinks, the martyred problet

it must be so. For,—what else could work it must be so. For,—what else could work the like effect in Me? what other source could give new vigour to this drooping frame, when almost crushed beneath its weight of woes? How was I not nigh well soft to every comfort, when from that blest abode a precious dew-fall of supernatural vigour lighting on me became a fire glowing in my heart, and spread through my very bones a joy so much too mighty for my earthly sense to support the extreme

" delight."

But the more we reflect, the more our aftonishment will be just, and the more it will prompt us to cry-out with increasing admiration :- If one frugal relish of beatitude distilled thus from distant Heaven; -if one drop of celestial comfort can soften thus, nay lull the sharpest pains; mingle refreshment with the fiercest flames; and fill with jubilee the breast of men, whose bodies are confined to rot in loathsome dungeons, or are fawing, tearing and difmembering on the rack; oh Heaven! oh flood of glory! oh torrent of delights! - what then must be the fweet abyss itself of thy unmeasurable joys? - If there be such pleasure found in struggling on the field of battle amidst unnumbered launces, in expectation of thee; what must it be to tri-Homin (peut peue Padne (agel

umph in the Capitol amidst innumerable trophies, when once possessed of thee? In a word, oh God of my heart! If (as the great St. Augustin observes) there be such charms as thy faints have found in hoping, weeping, bleeding for Thee; what and how vast must the delight be of seeing, holding and enjoying thee face to face; and That

forever?

As often as I recollect the native propenfity of God's infinite Love, to communicate to his Creatures the immenfe treasure of his Bounty; I can figure (metbinks) to my ravished mind an idea almost infinite of the vast inundations of unspeakable happiness, with which his magnificence overflows the heavenly Jerusalem. Doubtless Christians, you have read or heard of the amazing grandeur and prosperity of pagan Rome, while in the zenith of its splendour. As the rod of Moses devoured all the rods of the Egyptian foothfayers, so did the scepter of Rome swallow-up all the other scepters of the earth. Its rulers were absolute Sovereigns of the world; nay its simple citizens (greater themselves than monarchs) were honoured, courted and often envied by those who wore a diadem. What plenty, riches, pleasures and magnificence reigned within its walls! And well they might. For,—the feveral Nations of the globe (bent beneath the yoke of its vaffalage)

lage) concurred with emulation to empty their united treasures into its lap. And to whom was Rome indebted for all this, but to the supreme Disposer of crowns and empires? And wherefore did that all-wife and mighty Being pour so vast a profusion of opulence upon that fingle Capital, but that (in quality of the great Rewarder of all commendable deeds) he might recompense the moral virtues of its Inhabitants, as St. Augustin long fince judiciously remarked in his treatife on the city of God? But !- did not the almighty know how greatly their Crimes exceeded their virtues in heinouf-ness and number? Was he not apprised of their luxury, incests and massacres? Was he not well acquainted with their idolatries and other manifold excesses? Yes: God knew and faw them all. He faw and weighed the crimes of that aspiring city; and found them too many and enormous not to exclude its boafted heroes from his eternal bleffings. He faw and weighed its virtues too; and found their weight deficient. Their virtues in his all-penetrating eye were merely vice in masquerade, and their noblest actions prompted by vanity, ambition, avarice, revenge and other fuchlike tainted principles. But then the deeds themselves were great and good. And therefore not to leave the practifers of them wholly unrewarded, he payed them in this Dd 2 life

life with that stupendous overslow of tem-

poral happiness.

HERE then let us try to lift our Conjectures from earthly Rome to the heavenly Jerusalem, where God lays open all the treasures of his bliss. Now what and whom does he there behold? Oh! there he fees the Love and Purity of all his Saints. He fees whole millions of righteous fouls, Heroes of every nation, state, and sex, and age; who have lived on earth as if not in it: Princes, nobles, citizens and peafants: Men in short of every sphere, who held in fcorn the pomps and pleasures of the earth: Women of every rank from cottages to courts; who nobly trampled on their fex's delicacy, to cling to their loved Creator with greater force and freedom. There too he fees unnumbered valiant fouls from budding youth to withering decrepidness, who have for his fake braved every power of pain: There in a word he fees innumerable multitudes of his faithful fervants, both penitents and innocents; who learned, while yet conversant in the flesh, to purify their fpirit from all which was displeasing to him, and to fet no other value upon temporal life, than as an instrument of forwarding his glory.-What! Does the Almighty see all This in his celestial kingdom? " Oh! then (cries a boly Father of the " church) " church) what human mind is vast enough to comprehend the immense good things, " with which the God, who fees it all, will " recompense so much exalted merit?" In fact, with how profuse a hand may we not expect that our liberal Lord, on feeing This, will exert his bounty to the righteous; when he has been so generous to the wicked? What unbounded stores of heavenly blis may we not naturally conclude, that He will bestow on his friends; when we recollect how unreferved a portion of earthly felicity he deal'd-out to his profest enemies? Doubtless (revered Christians!) so unreserved God will be of his blifs to his faints in heaven, that he will there make them sharers in the whole treasure of his greatness and glory. But what do I talk of sharers? He will bestow on them his All: He will endow them with Himself. I (says the Lord) I myfelf will be your Protector and your immense Reward.

It is evident then, Christians, that the joys of the Righteous in Heaven must needs be universal; since their portion will be nothing less than God himself; the divine Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and End of all that is; who, reaching from end to end powerfully and disposing all things sweetly, is all at once both the center and circumterence of All that is desirable. All there-

fore which can be faid, rowards forming an adequate conception in this life of the exalted excellence of those universal joys, falls infinitely short of what They are in themselves. And yet all this immensity of happiness, which is laid-up in store for God's faithful fervants, would nevertheless be still imperfect, and still infusficient to gratify the capacious heart of man, or to express the boundless liberality of his Creator; if that happiness were not as permanent in its duration, as it is extensive in its worth.-This is the grand circumstance which crowns the joys of Heaven, and renders its holy inhabitants bleffed indeed; and without which they could not with strict propriety be called fo. For, as St. Augustin remarks, " That is not true beatitude, the eternal perma-" nence of which is a matter of doubt." Now fo true is the holy Father's observation. that I will be bold to fay, that the very least of all those ineffable sweets, which flow from the beatific vision, being crowned with eternity are infinitely more valuable, than All the farther innundations of blifs, which Heaven abounds with, could be; were Thefe to be finally ended, even after millions of ages. And where is the wonder; fince the greater the felicity of the righteous were for a time, the more their enjoyment of it must be allayed by the grating circumstance of knowing

knowing, that it would at the long run be brought to decay. Nothing less therefore could content the insatiable craving of immortal man, nor satisfy the infinite muniscence of an all-bounteous Deity, than graciously to dispose (as he did) that the beatitude of his Elect be not only universal but ever-

lafting.

FAIN would I here, beloved Christians, add a few words to awaken your just attention to the inestable generosity of our almighty Benefactor, in thus superabundantly rewarding the little temporal efforts of his useless servants with a whole eternity of such unmeasured recompence. For surely the consideration of That alone must suffice to instance every power of your souls with a rest-less desire to correspond to such unparalleled Love. But it is time to dismiss you for the present, ere your impatience get the better of your piety and tempt you to lose sight of the eternal rest prepared for you, by too long an interruption of that ease you are so inclined to indulge. I shall therefore remit the farther consideration of this endearing argument to my next discourse, with which I shall conclude our spiritual navigation through the mystic waters of eternal life.

For the present then, my beloved, content yourselves with knowing and reflecting,

that there is a Heaven prepared for you of immente felicity, fuch as neither tongue can utter, nor thought conceive: - a Heaven which abounds with all delights, that heart can wish, or God bestow: A Heaven universal in its joys; because its inhabitants are enriched with the beatitude, the glory, and the infinite perfections of God, nay with God himself. And let the prospect of That animate you to do fomething for the service of a Lord, who is so liberal in rewarding your unavailing fervices. Let the hopes of obtaining That arm you with patience and fortitude to bear your present evils for his fake; let the fear of losing That deter you from gratifying your licentious appetites with the falle goods of the earth; and let your apprehensions of losing That be chiefly derived from motives of love and gratitude to the divine author of That and You; that is, not fo much from a dread of lofing the joys inseparably annexed to the possession of him, as from a dread of being excluded the priviledge of eternally praising and adoring Him. To conclude, revered Auditors, remember your last things, and you will never fin. Keep This, the most desirable of them, forever in your fight: And the recruits of piety you will draw from thence, will so abundantly strengthen your filial hopes and fears, that, after watering the **fpiritual**

spiritual paradife of your converted hearts with growing grace and virtue, it will flowback with all your affections into the abyss. of uncreated Love; where your fouls will be replenished with the waters of eternal life; and where the righteous will be feasted and rejoiced in the presence of God, and be delighted with that substantial bliss;

Which, &c.



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ETERNAL LIFE.

SECOND DISCOURSE ON HEAVEN.

A river issued-out of the place of pleafure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the fourth river is EUPHRATES.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10. 14.

T must be confessed, revered Auditors, that Heaven (the mystic Eupbrates alluded to in the figurative Sense of my Text) is a truly thriving and fruitful Stream: Since, as we have already feen in part, it affords to its bleffed inhabitants an immense flood of fuch exquisite delights; that, tho' they may be foretasted in this life, they are not to be expressed. In fact the beatitude of Heaven, in some degree and by participation, has This in common with the perfections of its divine Author, that the more we attempt to measure it with our feeble understandings, the more we are forced to acknowledge that it is absolutely unmeasurable.

able. So that the only knowledge we are able to acquire of it in this life from our utmost endeavours to discover what it is, confifts in the being perfuaded, that it is an immense collection of ineffable delights, which no created language can help us to explain to others, or to comprehend our-felves; and that the nearest point of view in which we can approach to reconneitre its transcending excellence, is That of devoutly conjecturing the transcending beauty of the substance from the extraordinary pleafinguess of the shadow; and thence concluding with a kind of abstractive demonstration, that the Charms of the celestial ferusalem must needs be immense, since its facred Outlets (if I may be allowed the expression) are superlatively enchanting.

THERE is no possibility then of displaying Heaven in a perceptible manner to mortal eyes or intellects. We may indeed call it with the psalmist, a multitude of sweets: But then we must at the same time add with him, that it is a multitude of latent sweets, which the almighty Bestower of them has placed high above our present perception. We may indeed stile it with St. John, a delicious manna distilling into the souls of the gloristed Righteous from the clear and immediate Sight of God: But we must still acknowledge with that holy Apostle, that it is a hidden manna, of which we are inca-

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pable on this fide the grave of forming any competent idea. In short we are warranted by Christ himself, to compare it, for its abundance, to a mighty Treasure. And such it is in reality; but withal a secreted Treasure, so far above the reach of our mortal penetration, that all we can positively know of it is, that the Joys it affords must needs be supreme, immense and universally so; because, in that blissful mansion the Righteous are sure of possessing God, with all the plenitude of his divine perfections, as he himself has expressly declared to them. I myself, says the Lord, will be your Protector, and your immense Reward.

YES, oh dearly beloved fellow strugglers! If once you are so happy as to enter Heaven; there you will possess God whole and entire. There you will see him, no more as in a mirrour, in an enigma, or mysterious sigure; but clearly in himself and face to face. There, by thus beholding him without a veil, you will enjoy him without reserve. And that beautifying sight will communicate to your nature so much genuine excellence, that God will be wholly Yours and you His. It will raise you also to such an inessable likeness to Him, that you will become impeccable like God, and therefore immortal, and unchangeable like God; in a word, free, happy, and eternal, like God. Yes, says his divine Secretary;

We shall be like unto Him, because we shall see him just as he is. Since therefore We ourselves, in heaven, shall become thus perfectly like unto Him; it follows of course that our Happiness also is, and must necessarily be like unto His: that is, as I have already heretofore observed, not only universal in its joys, but eternal in its duration.

GREAT GOD then, who, to enflame our hearts with an ardent love of Thee, and egg us on to virtue, dost mercifully deign, not only to promise a boundless and unending recompense to the faithful efforts of thy unprofitable servants, but even to be thyfelf that recompense !-- oh ! make us sensible of this inestimable favour. And kindly help us so to correspond to this excess of bounty with persevering gratitude and love; that henceforth thirsting after nothing in this life but thy almighty Self, we may hereafter be admitted among thy faints to allay that holy thirst, and drink our fill of univerfal everlasting blis in thy divine embraces.

HAPPINESS is an object so very desirable in itself; that, as the great St. Augustin says, the bare sound of the Word awakens in an instant the whole attention of all Men. There is No-body in life, who is not enamoured with it: No-body, who

is not charmed with hearing it talked of. It is a loadstone that irrefishibly attracts every heart; and it is the favorite goal, which all human nature lives in the confrant pursuit of. How shall we then account for the fewness of those who really attain to the possession of it? Why, the cause is manifestly This, that the generality of mankind, mistakenly seek it where it does not exist, namely, in the transitory goods of this life. And therefore it is not at all amazing that they never attain it. For how is it possible after all, that perishable objects should fatiate unperishable souls? or that rational Beings should ever be rendered completely happy by things unspeakably beneath them? No, my God! thou alone art capable of totally fatisfying these hearts of thy own creating. It is even fo, Christians. Nothing less than Heaven can make us truly happy; and nothing less will be our portion there than God himfelf, the only real, effential, universal permanent Good; a Good in the possession of which our bearts will rejoice; and our joys, as our heavenly master assures us, no man sball take from us. In Heaven the truly Virtuous will be truly content, because they will have every cause so to be: Their Joys being fecured to them forever, without danger or fear of any disturbance within, or of any alarms from without. For the great

great Inspirer of their virtue will be the Crowner of their merit, and the plenitude of their triumph will be their union with Him. I will be their God, says he, and they shall be my people. So that in Him they will find all the good things their hearts can desire; life, vigour, beauty, plenty, peace, substantial joy, and never-fading

glory.

On my beloved fellow Christians! what an immensity of blis then does virtue invite us to possess! what an immensity of bliss do our passions prompt us to squander! oh Heaven? oh river of delights ! just subject of our hopes and fears! what floods of joy shall I be replenished with, if happily I reach Thee! what wealth shall I have madly squandered, if fatally I lose Thee! Celestial current! bitter as it is, to linger in this distant Babylon, still exiled from thy enchanting banks: More bitter by far is the misery of living in the cruel danger of never reaching Thee. Whenever therefore for a minute I try to streach my earthly chain, to fend up a wishful figh in fearch of Thee; how do I feel that faultering figh, recoil back half dispirited to my doubtful breast! how is not the joyful prospect of my future triumph there, clouded with just dismay, when I reflect on the uncertain victory, the dubious issue of my combat bere ! But whither does Transport hurry

hurry me? While loft in thought, I fuffer my withes to rove at random towards that blisful mansion; You, Christians, are inwardly perhaps reproaching me with neglect, in that as yet I have not given you one feeble sketch of its enchanting beauty and delights. I own the fault, my friends: And oh that I knew but how to mend it! Whereas whence, I befeech you; or from what model shall I borrow the outlines, to delineate even to your conjectures the charms of that delightful abode? If aught could avail me towards the lofty undertaking; it were furely the pencil of the prophet Isaiab, that facred repository of the almighty's choicest secrets. And yet should I feek his aid towards describing what Heaven is; even He would own himself unequal to the task. Even He would tell me, that to form an idea of Heaven, I must myself behold it. When you see it (says the sacred draughtsman) oh! then your heart will rejoice beyond measure.-When you see it; fuch will be the excess of your joy, that your very bones will blossom and bud-forth delight. Till then the almighty himself, by the same holy prophet's mouth, bids us be content to know no more of Heaven than, that there all things will be well with us. Tell the righteous, fays the Lord, that He shall be well. But here, methinks I hear you murmur to yourselves: " Well! what

our sanguine expectations then to dwindle into the simple circumstance of only
being well?" Ah Christians! what more
(I intreat you) can your warmest wishes
aim at, than being well forever? What
can God be more, than what in his own
divine nature he is, from all eternity essentially and supremely well? And what more
can his most perfect creatures aspire to be;
than by participation of his glory, eternally
like him compleatly well? Wherefore says
the Lord to his prophet:—Tell the righteous man, that he shall be well. Oh the laconic Message! but oh how full of solid
comfort!

To be well is to possess every possible good we can defire; to with for nothing more than we posses; and to be certain that our enjoyment of it will never end or decrease. An earthly prince can make his fubjects wealthy, with a fingle word. One breath of his can raise them to the summit of worldly honour, pomp and affluence: But all his princely power cannot infure to them the permanence of those goods, nor the certainty of being compleatly fatisfied, or truly well. Whatever dignities and opulence he lavish upon them : Whatever ease and pastime those favours procure to a man; the whole may prove infufficient to afford him contentment; or that

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that contentment may be palled by continuance, or destroyed by some foreign disturbance. Grandeur, parade and wealth and pleasures; affemblies, balls and concerts; feasts, sports, and public entertainments; spectacles and even triumphs, may in their feveral turns amuse awhile, but never can content: Nay they must be interrupted, and the fenfes be relieved by other fucceeding objects, in order not to tire. For all are but shallow, separate streams, which cannot flow into the heart together. And even if they could; they are too poor and scanty to fill and satisfy it: and consequently infufficient to compleat its happiness and make it truly well. How very different is the case of the righteous man in Heaven! Tell bim fays the Lord, that there be shall. be well. - Yes: Well in body and in foul; well in honour, pleafures, health and peace and plenty: Well, in fecurely possessing all his own happiness; all the happiness of his fellow faints; and all the happiness of his divine Benefactor. Tell the righteous man, that he shall be well; because the felicity he will there possess will be ineffable, unmeasurable and everlasting: well; because possessing all he can wish, he will always delight with equal ardour in what he poffesses: and superlatively well; because his desires being exempt from disquiet, his enjoyment will be free from diftafte. In a word (Isaigh!) as often as my faithful

faithful servants are anxious to know what Heaven is, tell them in one word; and let that word be, WELL. Not all the powers of created language, though exerted in a thousand volumes, can furnish a nobler conception of the joys of Heaven, than the

laconic expression—well.

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WHAT thanks then, revered Christians; what gratitude and love do we not owe to our almighty Benefactor for his unbounded bounty, in thus condescending not only to accept our unprofitable services, but even to reward them with fuch a share of happiness as will make us forever compleatly well? a happiness not only universal in its joys, but everlasting in its duration? Hadst thou, my God, been fatisfied with barely giving us one year of heavenly blis for every year of our poor, feeble, useless efforts in thy service; still must we have acknowledged Thee to be exuberantly liberal: For what proportion is or can there be between our ragged merits and thy celeftial recompences? How unworthy, as thy Apostle fays, are all our sufferings of this life, how unfit to be compared with the least portion of the future glory which is to be revealed in us? And nevertheless (oh inexhaustible, fource of goodness!) such is thy infinite magnificence; that Thou not only payeft Us a year of useless service with an age of recompence; but even requiteft a day's, a night's, Ff 2 171191277

night's, an hour's, nay oftentimes a fingle minute's effort to pleafe Thee; a cup of cold water given in thy name; a folitary wish; a bare defire to serve Thee, where the power is wanting to do more; and requitest it with health of body, peace of mind, delight of heart, and all the glory, joy and happiness of foul, which the fight, enjoyment, love and praise of Theetican give : And all this not only during a million of ages (a space almost beyond the stretch of human thought) but even during a vast, unlimited eternity don't drive more braves of

DEARLY beloved Auditors! If all this be fill too little to fatiate your impatience to know what Heaven is; what shall I say? Even try yourselves to fnatch a passing foretafte of it. Summon to your aid for that intent, all the pureft and most refined Affeetions of your fouls: And nobly try to foar in contemplation to the bleffed realms above. Figure each one to yourfelf, that the aufpicious hour strikes, when death is to transmit you to your Maker's presence. Come then! It is time, we will fay, to die: And you (I will suppose) have lived so innocent, or are become fo penitent, that you have absolutely nothing to obstruct your immediate flight to Heaven. Thrice happy fourls, whoever we be in fuch an enviable state ! Wing then your prosperous way. Difroifs this paltry globe: a fairer world is night's, waiting

waiting for you. It is done. Farewel, relations! farewel, mortal friends! corruption ! earth ! farewel. ---- Already (metbinks) your unentangled spirits take their joyous flight. Quick as unbodied thought you pass the elements, the sun, the stars, the highest firmament: and high above all that is corporeal, you gaze on Heaven; and the victorious hofts of Heaven are gazing all on you. Oh the exstatic jubilee, which reigns on both fides! If special gladness glows in all those generous souls (as their almighty Lord and ours tells us) for the conversion of every finner upon earth, though This be still in danger of relapsing into fin and being damned at last; think what an encrease of joy must fill those blessed citizens at meeting Your embraces, when in no more hazards of lofing you. If the bare transient smiles of a mortal creature, that is dear to you, shall often warm your hearts with an uncommon glee; think what a torrent of delight will overflow your breafts, when you behold the exulting love with which those immortal Beings will fallyforth to meet you. But look strait forward and behold! who are that happy pair, that move on with fuch joy, to welcome you to blifs? " Oh transport, metbinks I " bear you cry! my dear-loved parents? "You, to whom, next after God, I owe " more than my life, the kind correction, the " virtuous

" virtuous education the godly maxims, " and above all the forcible examples which egged me on to piety? Am I so doubly " bleft to find You here before me? and oh " my beloved brethren! confort! children! " are You in glory likewise? You also, my once bosom-friends? oh precious souls once " dear to me on earth, and now more dear " than ever! what anguish I endured at " parting with you all! but how is that an-" guish overpaid, now that I am blest again " with feeing you, never to be parted from " you more! But! what do my gladded eyes behold? am I yet farther bleft with the fight of Thee, oh Virgin Mother of my Lord? of Thee too, oh my guardian " Angel? of You likewife, oh facred Apostles " and companions of my Saviour? Oh " Saints and Angels all! how I rejoice to " be of your fociety! how fweet I find it to triumph in company with You, whole "holy lives and doctrines spurred me on to " victory! And oh my beloved, loving, " holy Fefus! dost Thou, even Thou, " vouchfafe to swell this tide of joys with " thy beatifying prefence? Hail, Son of " God! hail well-spring of eternal life and " love! Unfold thy godlike beauties to my " longing eyes: shew me thy facred wounds, " thy precious heart, thy human and thy "God-born Nature. Unveil thy entire " Self, thy eternal Father and coequal " Spirit,

" Spirit. Yes, Sacred Three-in-one! I fee " Thee : I enjoy Thee : And loft to myfelf,

" I live again more happily in Thee. Oh " God incomprehenfible! and yet I hold

" thee. Oh God without an equal! and

" yet I am now become like Thee. " God invisible! and yet I behold Thee face

" to face. Oh God of Majesty, omnipo-

" tence and uncreated glory! And yet (eter-

" nal thanks to thy unbounded mercy!) I " now approach to Thee; cling to Thee;

" and am in full possession of Thee for all

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FAIR would I hit upon some familiar image, which might help your very fenses to digest the somewhat abstracted stile in which I have here attempted to give you a conjectural sketch of some part of the joy: which will transport the faints, as I imagine, at their first entrance into Heaven. And the most expressive one which occurs to me at present, is a moving scene in the fortyfixth chapter of Genefis, recorded to have happened between the Patriarch Jacob and his beloved Joseph. Through the malignity of his elder children he had for many years lost this favorite son, and with him the darling comfort of his old age; when all on a sudden the gladsome news is brought him, that his long-lamented Joseph lives; nay, that he lives in splendor, and at but one remove from majesty. The first welcome

come account is quickly fucceeded by a fecond; and this by the fondest invitations from the dearly beloved youth himfelf, togo and share with him in His affluence and greatness: and the chariots of Pharabh are fent to convey him. Jacob accordingly fets-out on a journey to Egypt. And before he has travelled one half of the road, he is unexpectedly gratified with the fight of Joseph; who, warm with filial love, was come to meet and efcort him. And now once more facob is bleft with embracing the idol of his paternal affections. But whom does he thus fuddenly behold and embrace? Not Fofeph, the lowly shepherd, he was wont to bewail; but Joseph the minister of state and ruler of a mighty kingdom: Not Joseph measuring his painful way, as formerly, with many a weary step; but Joseph seated in a stately chariot, all splendour and authority. Imagine then, my friends, the joy which fuch a scene must give to such a loving parent. Guess how the cheeks of Joseph were be-dewed with the precious stream of gladness trickling from the venerable parent's eyes. Judge, if the double tide of pleasure and furprize must not be much too strong, and too impetuous for the feeble limbs and faculties of tottering Jacob. Beyond all power of expectation, he sees the matter of his grief become the subject of his joy: He fees the fondling fon, he had long bewailed

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wailed as dead, once more alive within his arms: And he fees himfelf from the lowly state of a parent of peasants raised to the dignity of father of a prince. Hence, overcome with the mighty swell of multiplied joys, he clings to and fastens round the neck of his Joseph; and in a frenzy (as it were) of unbridled delight, "Oh, methinke he cries! oh crown of all my joys! what " have I more to fee or covet, bleft as Lam " with seeing and holding Thee? ah! life " has now no farther fweets to charm me " with, which may compare with This. " Chearfully therefore could I refign my " breath this instant, within the arms of " Thee, my fon : Since Heaven has gra-" ciously preserved thee thus; to bless " my fight once more, and to confign my " Ashes to new life and splendour. Oh " let me die (fays Ifrael to Joseph) now that " I have seen Thy face, and leave Thee to u survive me."

On precious Souls of Christ's own purchase! which is the happy Soul among you all, who is to enter Heaven the first. There to enjoy the glorious sight of God, and (in God) the company of so many noble persons dear to it: Not like, a Jacob, to die after so rich a seast of joys and leave them all behind; but there to live and reign forever in an unbounded river, or rather ocean of delights? Oh! could I but discern the G g

bleffed creature; how would I haunt its every ftep, as Elifeus did his master's! how would I watch its every motion, never to lose sight of it! And were I so happy to be near and see that chosen soul taking its holy slight in the triumphal car of grace; how should I not (again like Elifeus) be apt to rend my garments, if not my very slesh, with eagerness to follow it! how should I not be prompted to cry-out with Him,—ob the precious chariot of Israel and its driver!—or with St. PAUL; who will rid me of the body of this death?—or sinally with the psalmist:—ah! who will give me the wings, as it were, of a dove; that I may sty-up and rest eternally with Thee?

Bur after all, my friends: Even in our present circumstances and as things are at present; why are we not equally sollicitous to make the case our own? Heaven we know was made for us, and we were made for Heaven. What then have we to do with this paltry earth, while that delightful abode is waiting for us? how ill does it become our dignity, as Christians, to feek contentment in a treacherous world, which keeps us from our spiritual birthright? how much more would it not become us, to nauseate this loathsome prison, and spurn at every pleasure here, which may divert our wishes or our thoughts from pressing forward towards our heavenly

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home? Let us but feriously reflect on this; and we shall naturally with holy David, become follicitous at heart to fend thither before us inceffant looks and wishes. Like Him, we shall daily be inclined to yearn and figh and fay within our anxious breafts: -" Ah precious land of promise! What pleasure or contentment can compensate " our being thus detained at a cruel dif-" tance from Thee? Shall we then madly " fuffer the false delusive prospects on our way, to retard our journey towards "Thee? No: Rather while we are con-" strained to tarry on the hateful banks of " this miserable flood of vice and folly: " while we are compelled to stay in this " worse than Babylonian thraldom: here will we pensively fit and weep and bemoan ourselves. Here will we constant-" ly forrow, figh and wish and wail, with our necks humbly bent to the yoke, but " with our hearts, our eyes, our fouls and " fenses fondly lifted towards Thee, oh; " lovely Sion, our present Hope, and fu-" ture ample Recompence!" Like what we are then, oh Christians, the free-born heirs of that delightful Country, thither let all our thoughts and defires henceforth be directed. For there, and only there we shall find the river of substantial bliss; the waters of eternal life, the only waters worth thirsting after; in a word the genuine flood of univer-Gg 2

fal everlasting Happiness. This is the fourth and last (in the numerical order) of the four mighty Heads or rivers of eternity, which the mystical sense of my text alludes to; and to which the single life-giving stream of a holy solid sear of God directs our present contemplations; that we may draw from thence constant recruits of grace and virtue, wherewith to water and improve the spiritual paradise of our converted hearts. And this fourth River is Euphrates, that is in other words, a thriving and fruit-

ful Stream of ineffable delights.

On mystical Euphrates! ob ever-thriving Source of joys! how fruitful art thou in delights! and how delicious are thy fruits to All, who are to bleffed as to gather them! Every one, who knows any thing of the terretrial globe, knows, that the earthly Euphrates derives its origin from the land of Ararat, which fignifies and is interpreted the curse of trembling. And therefore the thriving ftream which draws its fource from thence, is used with great propriety as a lively figure of the heavenly Eupbrates, that river of the waters of eternal life (as St. John calls it) which is the eternal refreshment of the righteous; and which everfince the fall of man, draws all its joys from the well-fought battles and well endured Afflictions so inseparable from the fatal figurative Ararat; that is to fay, from this

this almost as foon accurfed as created world; this native feat of terrors, cares, diffreffes, toils and perils. Bleffed therefore are They, who fuffer persecution for righ-teousness: for theirs is the kingdom of Hea-ven; theirs the heavenly Euphrates.

WHAT! is there no reaching Heaven, but through the afflictions of this world? No. Nor any living in this world exempt from all afflictions. It behoved Christ bimself (his Goodness so ordaining for our encouragement) to fuffer, and thus, that is by fufferings, to enter into bis glory. And as St. Paul bears witness, All, who (desirous of following him thither) are willing to live piously in Him, must in like manner suffer persecution. The world in fact abounds with little other than woes: and mifery is the only certain portion it has to be-flow, as well on the Wicked, as on the Good. For You indeed (oh chosen fouls!) who faithfully pursue the paths of virtue; there is this substantial comfort amidst your keenest sufferings: that, though you be afflicted now; the happy time will come, when your present forrows will be converted into joy, and your joy No-one shall take from you, as the divine Jesus himself affures you. Whereas how wretched is the lot of the Wicked, constrained as they are to fuffer often equally with You, and often more feverely than You, even in this life; and yet to endure

endure much heavier evils beyond it, without a prospect of those evils ever being ended! And nevertheless such is their deplorable blindness of heart, that they still hug their miseries, and mistake those very miseries for pleasures. But oh! what kind of pleasures are they? Meer portions of corrofive poison mingled with deadly opiates. Meer gilded doses of every heart-revolting bitter; rendered still more hateful by the nauseous fweets they are blended with. Oh Heaven! is it possible, that immortal souls created to be thy eternal citizens, can still not only tolerate but love a paltry world, and its intoxicating luscious baits? Alas! too certainly it is not only a possibility, but a melancholy truth. Not only the bulk of human, but even of christian individuals is made-up of fuch unthinking mortals : Deluded creatures, who not only like this worthless world, but hanker after it at every hazard; cling to it at every other cost; and for its fake, fet at nought (as the prophet fays) the desirable land. Yes. The final end of all the toils and fweats and virtuous struggles of the illustrious band of innocents: the fovereign object of the boiling tears and cordial compunction of the predestined tribe of Penitents: the Aim of all the cruel tortures borne by the heroic train of Martyrs: the price of the precious blood of our dear Redeemer: the whole ununbounded treasure of God's communicative Goodness, the Heaven of heavens is set at nought by Christians. Yes: Christians in general (oh dreadful thought!) prefer in practice, the fleeting, empty, false, delusive pleasures of a persidious world to the permanent substantial truly desirable joys of Heaven. In a word, They set at nought the

defirable land.

OH incomprehensible madness! that there should be found rational creatures, Individuals fo infatuated, as to yearn and run after an injurious deceitful world; a world forever promising and forever disappointing them! That there should be grey-haired mortals, with one leg in the grave and the other scarce half out, still fond of licking the dust and grasping the clay that is crushing them! still with gaping throats and griping hands stretched-out to catch and swallow the scanty drops of fancied sweets which fall, but to tantalize their impotence of relish! still infatiably craving a little more of This, or That; a little more of what, if gained, must soon be given-up! oh! it is fuch a frenzy that nothing could restrain us from treating those, who are affected with it, as absolute madmen, but our being all of us infected with the same contagion. In fact the world is so full of this kind of delirium, that it now passes current for wisdom. And hence it is that the prudent few who wifely

wisely despise the world for Heaven, are judged to be crazy by the frantic multitude. But will not These be forced to change their note; when, awakened by the final trumpet, they behold the splendid triumph of those happy Few! Yes. Then, as the prophet says, they will be constrained to cry-out:——" Fools! madmen, as we ourselves were! "we deemed their life a madness, and their

" end without bonour. Behold how they are ranked with the children of God; and their

" lot is among the faints!"

SINCE then the earth is become fo common a Bedlam; and its inhabitants, enamoured with their frenzy, are so fond of the gew-gaws which amuse it, who shall find eloquence enough to convince them of their madness? What energy of reason will be able to win them to renounce the intoxicating pleasures of this life for the permanent joys of Heaven? For my part, Christians, I know of no means so likely to work a like miraculous change in you, as the frequent ferious contemplation of Heaven itself. For oh Heaven! oh flood of blifs! how must not our hearts leap within us, when we feriously reflect on Thee? How must not our fouls struggle in our breasts and want to break their prison; when roused by the fweetly ravishing thought, that, if once we are so happy as to reach Thee and let our . feet on thy enchanting banks; there we fhall y (m) my

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shall see and possess all which man can wish, and more than man can conceive! that there, free from envy, jealousy, or pains, or fears, or losses, or vicisfitudes, we shall live and reign supremely blest in the dear society of many of our former kindred, friends and intimates; nay shall triumph with all the saints and angels; with the adorable

Jesus; with our all gracious God?

This being fo, revered Auditors, let us, no more be eager after this deceitful world and its inordinate pleasures. Let us have patience yet a little longer, to trail-on this lingering, breathing death: fince God commands us to spin it out. But let us resolve to live here, only because our Maker so commands. Indeed I must acknowledge with St. Augustin, that to drag-on this wretched shadow of life, with the solitary hope of future Heaven, amidst innumerable present risks of losing it, is at the best but a very life of bitternels. But, to cherish any hopes of Heaven, and still to indulge ourfelves in the idle pursuit of worldly pleasures, is something worse than a meer life of bitterness. It is a life (I must call it fo) of perpetual frenzy, or rather to speak more properly, a moral death, Henceforth then let us labour inceffantly to root out of our hearts every worldly attachment, that is in any degree incompatible with our eternal expectations. Let us mingle with Hh

our hopes and just desires of Heaven a constant holy fear of losing it; less with a selfish eye to the treasures we should forfeit by losing it, than from the filial consideration of the privilege we should forfeit of forever adoring and praising our heavenly Benefactor. By this means, the fountain of life, the filial fear of God, will enrich the spiritual paradise of our religious hearts, with every christian virtue, till at length it bear-back with its revolving tide All the affections of our fouls, and pour them into the abyss of God's uncreated Love; which is the genuine place of pleafure, whence it first issued-forth. And then We ourselves, drowning our every pain and fear, shall flow in substantial inexpressible gladness, peace and glory amidst an unbounded ocean of universal everlasting Happiness. Where viewing God face to face, we shall, as his prophet affures us, be inebriated with the plenty of His bouse; and He will cause us to drink of the torrent of his pleasure.

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Conclusive Discourse to Uncon-

A river issued-out of the place of pleasure, to water paradife; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the LORD God took man, and put him into the paradife of pleasure, to work and to keep it.

Gen. ch. ii. ver. 10, 15.

Auditors, you must have perceived, what I hinted at our first setting-out; namely, that great as the goodness of God has been in providing for the temporal exigencies of mankind, it is still greater with regard to their eternal concerns. He shewed it such to Adam, and he shews it such to Us. Not content with maintaining in our hearts during our state of recovered sinocence a paradise of baptismal grace, and watering it with the fountain of life, the filial sear of H h 2

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himself; he has kindly continued to us, in our state of personal prevarication the influence of that sacred stream divided into sour important heads, the just apprehensions of death, judgment, hell and heaven. And wherefore did he This but to afford us, even in a state of guilt, the means to repair our spiritual ruin with the waters of a sincere compunction. If then we suffer this excess of bounty to be lost upon us; who have we to blame, but ourselves. God, it is plain, has not been wanting to us. No: It is We (alas!) who have been wanting to God and to ourselves.

THAT our first parents forfeited the earthly paradife, was owing to no want of affistance from God, but to the want of industry in Them. To secure their abode in Eden from two capital extremes destructive alike to genuine happiness, namely labour and inaction; he placed them in a medium of employment free from fatigue, and of mental attention exempt from anxiety. The Lord God (fays the facred historian) took man and put him into the paradife of pleasure, to work, and to keep it. Had our forefathers but formed a right notion of happiness, they must have been sensible, that ease was not more effential to the enjoyment of their own felicity, than industry was necessary to the continuance of their ease; and that, though all labour be fatiguing and all anxiety watchful.

To UNCONVERTED SINNERS. watchful, all work is not laborious, nor alf vigilance reftlefs. In a word, bleft as they were with pleafures unpalled by folicitude, and plenty unembittered by toil, they would have been confcious, that the least they could reasonably wish, towards preserving paradise as compleat as they found it, was the easy task of working to keep it so: that is, of amuling themselves with the diverting employment of keeping it clear of infects and weeds, and watching the goodly fource of their affluence, along its watery way; in order to prevent the opening, which let out that friendly but fugitive stream, from giving an inlet to fome enemy flood. But alas! as I before observed. Man when be was in bonour did not understand. Our unhappy parents were too much taken-up with the enjoyment of their then present happiness, to attend to its future perma-Hence they lofed paradile, and nence. paradife was loft to us. However, it were not less unjust than unprofitable to throw upon Adam all the blame of a guilt, that is com-mon to Us all. Our wills were eminently placed in His; and God through Him tried the obedience of mankind in a point in which he knew, that All would act alike. And therefore we have no room to reproach those secondary authors of our Being with a fault, which We ourselves had a share in: Since

what They did, We also should have done

and

and in some measure did: Being All of us (Christ and his blessed mother only excepted) but so many tainted rivulets (as it were) of human nature, derived from those its first corrupted springs. Instead therefore of unnaturally railing at their indolence and irreflection, which we have so closely followed, let us rather after their example learn wisdom from our former folly and try to turn our

losses to advantage.

WHEN our forefathers had once fallen from their primitive innocence and its prerogatives; and the earth (now empowered to revolt against Them, as They had rebelled against heaven) refused all things to their support, but what they extorted from its reluctant bowels by dint of labour: And when the Heads, into which the watry fource of their former affluence was parted, denied them every boon, but what they drew thence with the fweat of their brows: if they had still-persisted in their prior indolence; what would have become of Them and of Us? Alas! there would have been an end of human nature. They, before their natural time, must have perished to this life, for want of sustenance; and perished to life eternal, for want of amendment: And We, perhaps, through the guilty imbecillity of those subordinate causes of our existence, might never have had a Being, nor confequently become coheirs with Christ to his eternal

To UNCONVERTED SINNERS. eternal father's glory. But happily made wifer by dear-bought experience, they repaired their former neglect with after attention; and by prudent reformation protracted life to a respectable length of years; stocked the earth with inhabitants; and peopled heaven with themselves and a numerous offspring: leaving to Us their posterity a memorable lesson to imitate their Rise, as we have but too minutely copied their Fall. Ah! let us then wifely catch the important instruction and reduce it to practice.

LIKE those our unwary Ancestors, I fear. we have most of us forfeited the spiritual paradife of our baptismal innocence, and with it the fountain of life, the original stream of filial fear of God. And yet the divine Mercy has graciously deigned to continue to us the means for recovering both, by dividing that fear into falutary apprehensions of our four Last Things, namely, Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven. And therefore fays his prophet, remember your last things, and you will never fin. Like our first parents then, let us retrieve our past neglects with our future care. If God, on His part, has kindly planted in the heart of man a paradise of baptismal or penitential grace; it is with the defign that man, on his part, be industrious to work and to keep it. And the most effectual means of answering the diyine purpose is to employ each day some out mod ricrious

derious thoughts on these Last Things, to which his prophet directs us, as an effectual

remedy against fin,

AFTER all I have faid in the preceding Discourses concerning these last important Things, I am less afraid, revered Auditors of your forgetting what I have faid, or making no Use of it, than I am of your making a wrong one, and thereby converting to poison what I meaned for your Aliment. My chief apprehensions are, in the first place, lest impenitent sinners (instead of remembering the dreadful truths I told them, on purpose to excite them to draw thence the waters of faving compunction) should gather fresh matter of presumption from the comforts which in my two last discourses I intended only for the righteous : And fecondly, lest the righteous (instead of drawing courage from the conjectural glimple of heaven, I therein endeavoured to give them) should so totally dwell on the terrors of death. judgment, and hell, which belong only to the wicked, and be so far dispirited by them, as to fink into pufillanimous dejection. To guard therefore both classes of hearers from these perilous extremes will be the aim of my conclusive reflections on this weighty matter. Which, to avoid confusion, I shall divide into two separate Addresses; the one defigned to administer consolation to the Good; the other to avert, if possible, eternal ruin from the Bad.

IF in doing this I begin with the wicked; it is not for want of an equal concern for the righteous; but because I consider These as more immediately under the wing of God's protecting Love. And therefore in humble imitation of our common Master. I shall leave them awhile to his all-sufficient guidance, to go in fearch of those wandering sheep, who are straying to perdition in a maze of vice and folly: That I may try, if perchance there be any awaking them to a sense of their danger, so as to restore them to God and to themselves. To You then (oh yet unyielding Sinners of every state!) and only to You, I mean to address my thoughts in this discourse: In which I purpole to shew you, that, without an utter change of life, You have no room to draw any comfort from the prospect of that heaven, which God has prepared for his Elect.

OH God of unconquered mercy! firetch forth thy faving arm in pity to thy yet rebellious children, and extricate them from the labyrinth of guile in which they are involved. Permit no vain presumption to confirm them in the blindness of their hearts; but make them comprehend how terrible it is to fall into the avenging bands of the living God I i

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You cannot be insensible, beloved Auditors, how difficult a task the physician would undertake, who should pretend both to benefit his patients and to please them too, that is, never to forfeit his integrity by neglecting their cure, nor ever to hazard his interest by thwarting their humours. In violent cases, where quickners are wanting; pukings, bleedings, cuppings, blifters and incisions must be prescribed. Repugnant remedies indeed! Yet all of them are fometimes necessary; especially where lenitives and lullers would occasion death. Still fuch is the too general infatuation of the Sick, that, even in the most fatal paroxysms, let the doctor but hush present pain with an opiate; and though it rather encrease than check the distemper, he will probably, at the expence of conscience, secure his credit with the very person he is hurrying out of Whereas, if, too honest to sacrifice life. probity to applause, he boldly applies the rugged reliefs he knows to be requisite; he runs every rifk of his fractious patient's diflike and of being discarded and railed-at as unskilful and hard-hearted, if not perhaps worfe. And the quacks of his profession are fure to be the first and the loudest in the clamour against him.

Thus to a tittle does it too often happen to physicians of the foul, the preachers and teachers

teachers of God's holy word. However desperate be the moral condition of finners; they will hear of no remedies which disturb their delufive tranquillity, though ever fo requifire. The only way to escape their diflike is to study their ease: No matter for a cure. Their passions must be humoured; their vices must be soothed, and their remorfes quieted with composing draughts of complaifant doctrines; or rather amused and beguiled with unseasonable reflections on the weakness of human nature, on the mercies of God, on the merits of Christ, and on the joys of heaven: Reflections, which, however true in themselves, are too often falfely adapted to the habitual Sinner's fituation. Mean time not a word must be uttered of the power of God's Justice, of the vengeance due to a crucified Redeemer's injured blood; not a word of death, judgment and hell. These are such grating truths to the ears of squeamish Sinners, that if a preacher prefume to ruffle their prefumption with fuch alarming fubjects; it is a hundred to one, but the graceless inconsiderate tribe let loofe all their malice, witticism and little arts, to satirize and sneer away his doctrine: Or where the doctrine is too substantial for the rotten teeth of censure, at least they keep nibbling at his manner of treating it. " He " is tedious and severe; he dwells too long " on one thing: he never knows when to " have Ii 2

" have done; his language is too high, or " too low; too obscure, or too plain; and " he himself is too gay, or too grave; too " hot, or too cold; too this, or too that :--" In short He is and exists; and They could "enjoy wickedness with more peace and " less discredit, if He were not." Such of old was the treatment Jeremiah received from the ungrateful Jews for attempting to fave them by repentance from the wrath hanging over their heads. " Come, they " cry, let us put wood in bis bread: let us " mix it with faw-dust: let us choke him " at once and put him to filence with poi-" fon or defamation: In short, let us cut bim " off from the land of the living." So likewise, long before Jeremiah, such was the requital Joseph met with from his jealous unnatural brethren, for daring, though authorized by a prophetic dream, to warn them of their future humiliation. And fuch is the treatment, which every faithful minister of God must be prepared to endure from the ingratitude of the generality of modern christians, and often times even from Those who pique themselves with some pretentions to nicety of conscience. Such, I fay again, is the fruit he must chiefly expect from his labours; if, by attacking Vice in the open field, he dare attempt to gall prefumptuous Sinners to repentance: Happy at last, if he so far succeed as to recall here and. and there one of those wilful Victims of illusion from his beloved precipice: But mostly sure of noisy opposition from the headstrong bulk. And where is the wonder, when there are seldom wanting some time-serving prophets to egg them on and

give the leading Outcry.

INDEED in the genuine fold of Christ the number is happily not great of the like pernatious hirelings. But then, is not that happiness much more the effect of his Church's vigilance, than of any circumspection in You? To speak one melancholy truth it must be owned, that Christians in general are but too defirous, that We rather foothe their every passion, than help them to subdue it. In fact, how impatient are they not for the most part with every truth we utter, that checks in ever fo flender a degree their favorite appetites. And as for You in particular, oh hardened Sinners! with what delirious perversity do not You spurn at every saving maxim, with which we endeavour to awake your fleeping consciences?—Not that you are insensible of the ruinous state you are in. On the reverse. Your transgressions bear heavily on you, and too heavily not to oppress you, with frequent dismay. You are often in horrible frights: And you wish us to help you to shake them off. But how do ye with us to affift you? Matchless extravagance!

gance! You want us to rid you of your dreads; not by removing the cause, but by concealing it. You would have us exert all our rhetoric to metamorphole your guilt into innocence; to dignify your vices into virtues; and to teach you (by new-model-ling the gospel of Christ) a shorter easier cut to heaven through the broad way of worldly granifications, than through the narrow and only path of christian self-denial. In short you say to us in your hearts, as the Jews did to Isaiab heretofore: "Speak to us and welcome as often as " ye please : But still take care, that you " always speak to us pleasing things." And indeed woe to us, if we comply not with your inclination. For then you are mostly fure, not only to withdraw from us every mark of your favour, but even to refuse us common justice. Sure to load us with the bitterest effects of your private scorn, neglect and censure; nay with public insult, ridicule and obloquy: And sure to make us fensible, that the only means to gain and preserve your friendship is to wink at your perdition. But fay oh generation of felfbeguilers! on whom in the end will your envenomed stings recoil? what can ye expect, but farther ruin, from thus perverfely tempting your pastors to misguide you? what does fuch conduct merit, but that you should live to see the time (which seems to ad-

202 advance with hafty strides) when faithful guides to falvation shall be wished for in earnest, but sought after in vain : A time, if it do come, when (according to Ezekiel's prediction) Diftress coming upon you, you will feek for peace, and there shall be none. For trouble will come upon trouble : AND you will feek a vision from the prophet : But the Law Shall perish from the Priests, and Counsel from the Ancients. at 316 voult mails issues

THAT I do not fay this without a cause, I want no other witness than the one which exists in your own breasts. Out of the number who flocked hither to my two last discourses, to gratify their self-love with a prospect of heaven, how many (could the truth be known) purposely declined hearing the preceding ones, left their paffions (hould be checked with the unflattering Views of death, judgment and hell? And even how few of those among you, who attended to them all, have liftened to any useful purpose? Alas! from the little change, that appears in your manners, what can I reasonably conclude, but that Most of you have trembled at those evils in vain; and (instead of taking one step to avoid them) have drowned your fears in prefumptuous hopes of a heaven, you are nowise disposed to deserve. While Others of you again, instead of improving your just terrors to falutary anger against yourselves, nitely have

have turned all your spleen against the preacher for disturbing your delusive dreams of peace. But tell me, ye willing dupes of deception! Do ye imagine, the evils we warn you of have no real existence? If so; it is not Us you are to condemn; but the Almighty and his prophets from whom we derive all we advance concerning them. Or do ye suppose, that We paint those evils greater than they are in fact? ah foolish mortals! undeceive yourselves. It is past the power of preachers to exaggerate or even to express in equal terms the deep distress, which impenitent Sinners will feel both in and after death.

YES, oh daring Sinner! unless thou feriously repent before hand, thou wilt find it fo. The day will come when thou wilt fadly feel what thou are now fo loth to hear: the day of death; when, as the pfalmist fays, the Sinner will fee it, and be enraged: He will gnash his teeth, and waste away ! For then (alas!) the define of the wicked will perish. And then (woe is me !) how will thy fight be fatally cleared-up, while firetched upon thy dying couch, thy agonizing foul crushed by its load of guilt will thrink with convultive dread of thy infulted maker calling thee to trial ! ah ! then to thy forrow thou wilt find, that all the terrifying truths I have told thee concerning the death of impenitent Sinners fall infinitely

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nitely fhort of the reality. And when thou appearest at his dreadful feat of Justice, where all things in thee and about thee will find a voice to impeach thee: When the light will accuse thee of polluting its. fplendor with thy bare-faced defiance of all authority human and divine; and darkness will accuse thee of abusing its gloom to cover thy obscenities and frauds: When thy faculties one by one will upbraid thee with perverting them to indulge thy lawless appetites, and thy confcience will reproach thee with proftituting it to gratify thy every vicious propenfity: When thy injured Saviour will convict thee of trampling on his precious body, by foully abusing his graces, facraments and facred truths; and his eternal Father will fay to Thee, as to impious Cain of yote:—the Voice of thy brother's blood cries to me from the earth: Oh then! how wilt thou fatally find all the powers of human energy too faint and poor to speak the genuine horrors of that bitter period. For then (alas!) there will be no playing out of fight, no pleading fickness, or appointments, to put-off the evil hour of judgment: But thou must stand the shock and own the justice of the Sentence pronounced against thee, Go thou accurfed one into everlasting fire. And what is worse thou wilt not be able to elude the Hell, to which it gives thee up forever. What there-

therefore can it avail thee after death to have eluded during life the being put in mind of Hell, or any vain endeavours to believe it less desoling, than God's minifters, by his authority describe it? Since for want of often thinking on it to the purpose while thou hadft time, thou wilt be doomed, when time shall be no more, to feel it with severity and feel it without end; compelled by fad experience to confess its evils infinitely beyond all created powers of exaggeration, or even competent expression.

IF death, judgment and hell were evils, which, like fome fits of ague or vapours, are often best avoided by never thinking on them; the wicked would have reason to shun the being reminded of them, and every preacher would be to blame, who made them a subject of discourse. But since the case is quite different: Since God, by one prophet, affures them, that the grand cause of all the desolation which attends upon obstinate Sinners is that No man lays reflection seriously to beart; and, by another, inculcates to them the remembrance of those evils as a powerful antidote against them,remember your last things and you will never fin; how shall we account for their untoward aversion to hearing them spoken of ?-Why - the Cause is but too evident. They are conscious already of the extreme wretchedness, to which their present inordinate

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dinate pursuits expose them: But then they are so obstinately bent on persisting in them at every risk; that the more they are stung with remorfes, the more they wish to throw at a distance all thoughts of futurity which may damp the pleasure they falsely promise themselves in those pursuits; And therefore do they chiefly endeavour to drown all remorfe and reflection in diffipation and false mirth. This however they cannot compass, so long as preachers keep reminding them of death, judgment and hell. For these alarming subjects gall their self-condemning consciences; lower their prefumptuous expectations; check their temerity; humble their pride of spirit; ruffle their self-love: and if they reach not to put an entire stop to their infatiable avidity after guilty pleafure; that pleafure is at least embittered with the necessity of feeling, that (while they perfift in their criminal attachments) they have nothing to expect in death but dread and dismay, nothing to hope for beyond it but endless ruin. Hence it is that habitual Sinners are fo unwilling to hear these subjects started, and so peevish with All who do fart them, or otherwise venture to attack those vices which make it necessary to start them. And hence it is also, that to filence God's Ministers if possible, and restrain them from daring to make open war against vice and folly; every profli-Kk 2

gate now-of-days pretends to establish an exclusive privilege against the reproof of any sinners of his own profession: And to this end artfully confounds the interests and credit of the whole fraternity he belongs to with the impunity of every rotten member,

whose actions are a disgrace to it.

IN FACT fo very privileged is fin become of late, that, to reproach wicked fervants, masters, soldiers, tradesmen, or practitioners in law or physic or any other calling, with the horrid Abuses daily committed by some in every one of These; and to remind them of the horrors which wait for them in death, judgment and hell, unless they forthwith repent in good earnest, repair every wrong they have done to the utmost of their power, and amend their lives for good; is now forfooth reputed waging war against the whole community, whose faulty members only We reprove. To remind a high-lifed finner, that there is a hell for graceless quality, is looked upon as little less than scandalum magnatum and an indignity to the Great in general. To warn the heedless Ecclesiastic, that churchmen may be damned, is treated as almost treason against the church itself. And but to hint that Christian Pharisees, and even those Lukewarm Christians who, pluming themselves with all the outside forms of piery, neglect the inward warmth which is effentially gate

tially requifite to give to their religious exercises life and spirit, is often made to passfor an attack upon true devotion. Sacred ministers of God's unperishable word! to whom then shall ye henceforth denounce the wrath to come; if all these ungodly groupes of daring finners are to be exempt? How truly hard is your condition? Not indeed so much on account of the laborious duties entailed upon your function, as of the danger to which you stand exposed. Made answerable as you are for the blood of Sinners, if they perish through your neglect of warning them; and if you warn them, liable to the grief of feeing them too often pervert your falutary admonitions to their increase of guilt and condemnation: - Threatened with the Almighty's indignation, if you conceal from them his wrath and impending vengeance; and if you reveal them, almost fure to have your charity wrested to finister constructions injurious to your credit, your peace, perhaps your very fafety.

But oh unyielding Sinners! who, but yourselves can forbear to tremble at your perversity? For who can help seeing, that for the very reason, that death, judgment and hell startle you; you ought the rather to wish, that we often entertain you on those alarming subjects? The more they agitate your spirits, the fitter they are to rouze ye to embrace a state of safety: like

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those efficacious medicines, which, in a desperate lethargy or palfy, generally work a furer speedier cure; the more they vellicate the springs of life, and bring a patient to his feeling. This is not only applicable to those more obvious profligates, whose life is one continued tiffue of glaring vice; but alfo, and perhaps still more, to those more covered ones, who place all virtue in its fair appearances, heedless of the substance: To You, (I mean) oh modern pharifees! and equally to You, oh lukewarm, half-benumbed professors of christianity! who neither cold nor bot in the Almighty's fervice, are burdensome to Christ, to his church and to its founder members, like paralytic limbs to a living body; or (as some eminent Divines remark and the Sacred text itself infinuates) like draughts of tepid water to found ftomachs, fit only to provoke a vomit.

IF faints like a ferome and a Gregory, with all their fanctity, found it, as they themselves declare, not only profitable but necessary towards the improvement of their piety, to think both seriously and often on death, judgment and hell; how much more requisite must not such reflections be to rescue You from vice, oh Sinners of every class! Oh! would you then but try the experiment! Did you with Ezekiel often in the midst of your days, that is, in the bloom

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of life and health, go down in spirit to the gates of bell, and there with Isaiab ask yourselves this question-which of us all will be able to dwell with a devouring fire? which of us all shall take-up his abode in these everlasting stames? how would you not be rouzed to a thorough change of life! how would you not feel yourselves impelled to resolve upon every effectual means to escape those horrible evils you hate fo much to hear of ven Helf freen on ignorating in

at present!

For this reason it is, rash mortals, that we are bound to remind you often of your danger. For this reason it is that, till You amend your lives, eternal punishments are all We have to anounce to you, and all You have to expect. Boast not then to other hardened Sinners like yourselves, that I lately talked of a heaven in store for You and Them, It is false: I meaned not to promise a heaven to You, while ye persist in your contempt of the Author of that heaven. God, it is true has promised, and (ever faithful to his word) will grant a heaven of joys beyond conception to his Elect; that is, to those, who honour, fear, obey and love him; to those, who, living a life of constant innocence; or, repairing their inconstancy with proper fruits of penance, close that life with a holy death. And is not thus much enough to prove, that God is infinitely good? To prevail on finners to

own him merciful, must we needs figure him unjust and weak? Must we absurdly suppose, that he will lavish his inestimable treasures on heaven-defying finners?—On whom ?-On his unyielding enemies? on rebels, who fcorn, dishonour and infult him? on miscreants, who abuse his graces, inspirations, and calls to repentance? To expect this at our hands, what must you make of us? what must ye think of heaven itself? --- Where were the worth of an inheritance, that might be purchased at so cheap a rate, so infamous a price? Where were the reward of virtue, if heaven could be the portion of unrepenting criminals? To suppose a like absurdity; what a motley and injurious idea must we not form of God's wisdom, goodness, power and equity? Again then I say it: God is infinitely good and gracious: But he is also infinitely wife and just. Again I fay it: There is a heaven of boundless happiness: But not for You, (oh daring Sinners) without a timely due conversion of your hearts. In your present state, all You have a right to is the horrid evils which wait for you in death, judgment and hell: And the only certain means you have to escape them, is to think on and weigh them well and often.

PLEAD not for an excuse to banish them from your thoughts, that they may fright and drive ye to despair. Too venturous mortals!

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there is little room for fears of that kinds Read the whole facred Scriptures through and of the many reprobates recorded there. you will find but Two, who appear to have damned themselves by over-dread of God's feverity, namely Cain and Judas: precipitated even They into that excess by previous prefumption in his goodness. Whereas what untold Numbers have perished for want of fearing God at all. And this (oh deliberate finners!) is what you have most cause to dread. What! You despair: a likely thing indeed, that you will be eafily prompted to despair by remembering his rigours, -You (I fay) who pretend to be so intimate with his elemency.-Away then with the idle plea. It is a meer pretext. Despair is seldom the ruling vice of Daring Sinners, till death freal unawares upon them, and rob them of the leifure for prefuming-on. First shew some degree of awe of God; and then will be the proper time for his ministers to think of guarding you from the perversion of that awe to dangerous extremes. For the rolt -- the Christians, whom Satan chiefly tempts to despond, are They who have fome fear of their Creator. And fuch indeed may want to be supported with confoling hopes of the heaven they are invited to partake of. But as for You; undaunted Sinners; You are unhappily but too much felf-confoled already; though it gailol

be sadly true, that in your present state You have no room to gather any comfort from that enchanting object: For there is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord.

SUFFER me then (oh too presumptuous mortals!) once more to address you with Ezekiel in God's name. For still you are objects of his fond desires; still purchases of the precious blood of Jesus. Turn ye to me, faith the Lord, and I will return to you, faith the Lord. It is not yet too late: though foon it may be fo. With speed then, return from your evil ways: why will ye die, oh house of Israel? ah! why indeed? why will ye needs expose yourselves to die eternally, oh heirs of God and coheirs with his heavenly Son to his unending glory? Think, I conjure you of the endearing language with which your almighty parent invites you to return to him: And remember withal, that nothing less than an eternity of desolation must attend your neglecting his gracious

To conclude then (oh Wicked livers in general!) if you at all desire solid comfort: If you wish to recover your lost inheritance, resolve forthwith to reform your wicked course of life: Instead of hushing remorse with false hopes of a heaven you take no pains to deserve; think daily of the certain death, the dreadful judgment, and the defoling

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foling endless hell you must expect, unless you repent in time and in good earnest. Be these the frequent subjects of your future meditations; at least till you have happily excited some fear of God within you. Then indeed you may begin to raife your humble thoughts to heaven: Nay then it will be right to feafon your awe of your offended Judge, with hopes in the promises of your gracious Saviour. By thefe means, if you are faithful in the use of them, you will be fafe against every danger from defponding gloom. For, your religious awe of God, when thus improved and feafoned with a religious confidence in him, will become a truly filial fear; that is, a fear arifing less from a fordid apprehension of his stripes, than from a generous attachment to his honour and good pleasure. And such a filial fear of God will prove to you in good earnest a fountain of life to guard ye from the ruin of death. It will not only enable you to work and recover by converfion the paradife of grace you have loft, but it will also most powerfully help you to workon and to keep it with persevering vigilance. And after copiously watering and enriching your penitential hearts with every christian virtue, the fame facred stream will pour all your foul's affections into the abyss of uncreated Love (that eternal place of pleasure) whence it first issued-forth: Where you will Ll 2 reign

reign triumphant with the Lord your God; and, staring in the riches of his glory, you will sweetly experience what he has so so-lemnly protested by the mouth of Ezekiel his servant, that He wills not the death of the wicked man, but rather that he be converted and live—a life of universal everlasting happiness.

will be fate against every danger from despeeding gloom. Fur, your religious aveor God, when thus improved and fathmed with a religious considence in him, will become a truly filleliner; that is, a fear

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CONCLUSIVE DISCOURSE TO THE INNO-CENT AND PENITENT RIGHTEOUS.

A river issued-out of the place of pleasure, to water paradise; which thence is divided into four Heads: And the LORD GOD took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to work and to keep it.

Gen, ch. ii. ver. 10, 15.

revered Auditors, had great reason to call the holy sear of God a fountain of life: for it is such in fact. It is the source and the stay of our very essence, if we be but considered as what we really are—Beings created by God to be eternally happy. While we are possessed of that sacred spring, no adverse cause can obstruct or disturb our enjoyment of inward selicity: to him who feareth the Lord no evils shall happen, says Ecclesiasticus. Whereas once we part with That,

That, we must also bid adieu to all solid permanent happiness: if thou hold not thyfelf incessantly in the fear of the Lord, faith the same inspired writer; thy abode shall be quickly subverted. Had our first parents never loft fight of that fountain of life; they would never have forfeited the paradife of their primitive innocence: And had they not by penitential amendment regained that habit of grace in which it chiefly confifted; they would never have recovered their original right to a paradife of glory. It is likewife by parting from the same blessed stream, that so many christians forfeit the paradife of their baptismal fanctification: And it is only by returning again to that life-giving fource, by means of the waters of a fincere compunction, that they ever obtain the mercy of having a new paradife of penitential grace replanted in their hearts: So it is in like manner only by constantly drawing thence the waters of inward purity, that (once they have recovered that grace) They (as well as the innocent) are enabled to work and to keep it with perseverance to the end.

It is plain then, that the holy fear of God is fovereignly useful and indespensably necessary alike to the Righteous and the Unrighteous. It is so to the Righteous, whether innocents, or penitents, towards helping them to the end to work and to keep the spirit-

spiritual paradise of divine grace implanted in their breafts: And it is so to the unrighteous, towards enabling them to work and recover the paradise of grace they have lost. It was therefore, to forward or excite the fame facred fear in both kinds of christians (as their respective situations might require) that I invited you All, beloved fellow chriftians, to join with me in a kind of spiritual navigation through the four great heads, into which (fince the fall of man) that fingle mystic river divides our religious apprehenfions: I mean the aweful floods of death, judgment, bell and beaven, those mystic streams of eternity alluded to in the allegoric sense of my text :- that is, in more familiar language, the important Four Last Things, on which our eternal mifery or happiness depends. And these indeed are the grand fources, to which (by the mouth of Ecclefiasticus) God himself directs our attention in this life, as to the effectual means of afcertaining our endless safety in the other, when he fays: Remember your last things, and you shall never fin. As if he had faid :---Remember your last things, oh christian " Sinners! that you may draw from thence the waters of a fincere compunction, to-" wards recovering the holy fear of God " and the paradife of grace you have therewith loft. Remember too your last things, oh innocent and penitent Christians!

that

" that you may draw thence the waters of " inward purity, in order to improve the " holy fear of God and the paradife of grace

" you at present happily possess" parting

Ir in the course of our religious navigation (as I am warranted to call this feries of spiritual reflections) I have terrifyed the minds of any of you with a prospect of the horrors, which death, judgment and bell will bring upon the impenitent wicked; I have made you ample amends with the conjectural view of the joys which Heaven has in store for righteous Innocents and Penitents. And whatever either ftrength of felf-love, or weakness of faith may incline you to think; I have been fo far from employing, in the one or the other, the least exaggeration or hyperbole, that I have been forced by absolute impotence of language to stop infinitely short of reality: All utterance being too feeble to express the endless misery allotted to the determined Reprobate and all colours too poor to paint the eternal delights, which God has in store for the steady Upright. After all I have said then to unrepening finners concerning the horrible death, judgment and bell, to which their obstinacy exposes them; nothing but rank perversity can embolden them to draw. matter of presumption from aught I have advanced for the encouragement of the Good. And after all I have faid to These about and:

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about the enchanting beaven, which is prepared to crown their perseverance, nothing but an excess of pufillanimity can tempt them to gather motives of dejection from any thing I have uttered towards repressing the arrogance of the Wicked. But I have already directed some efforts apart to those infatuated felf-deluders, towards opening their eyes (if possible) to the perception of their ruinous mistake: And therefore I shall now devote this whole discourse to You, oh Righteous Souls both innocent and penitent! And I hope thereby to confole and make ye fenfible, that, while you continue faithfully to work and to keep the paradife of grace God has planted within you, You have no cause to be dismayed with the terrible death, judgment and hell which I have denounced to the impenitent wicked.

Deten thou mean time (oh generous Donor of all substantial gists!) to dart a ray
of thy celestial light upon our souls, in
order to dispell from us every mist of error, ignorance and perversity. Permit
not our ragged merits to weaken our filial
awe of Thee; or any pusillanimous dismay
to shake the simmess of our considence in
thy unwearied mercy. But be thyself our
consolation and support; and kindly
help us always to remember, bow good
Thou art to those, who put their trust in
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Thee:—to the foul that feeks thee in good earnest.

heir repensance in a conf THE Waters of compunction, revered Auditors, are not more necessary to finners, towards recovering the fear of God and the gift of repentance, than the waters of inward purity are to the Righteous, towards keeping and improving the grace of God within them. By the waters of inward purity I mean an habitual cleanness of heart, not only from the practice of deadly fin, but even from every affection to it :-- I mean the inward flow of justifying piety, which christian Innocents and Penitents enjoy from the supernatural endowments infused into their breasts by the Holy Ghoft, who dwells within them :- I mean the same mystic unction of Godliness, which Isaiab spoke of to the Righteous of Israel, when he faid, Ye shall draw waters from the fountains of your Saviour - I mean the fame faving spirit of religious uprightness, which, by the mouth of Joel, the Lord promised both to Innocents and Penitents, towards continuing and improving in his favour; on condition of their properly asking it in his name, I will pour-forth my. Spirit upon all flesh, faith the Lord; and it shall be, that All, who invoke the name of the Lord, shall be faved :- I mean the same parity of conscience, which, by Ezekiel, He expressly

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expressly promised to Penitents in particular, who faithfully persevere to work and to keep their repentance in a constant improvement: I will pour on you CLEAN WATER, faith the Lord, and ye shall be cleansed from all your foulnesses: that is (for your clearer comprehension of what this Water is) I will give you a CLEAN HEART, and will put a NEW SPIRIT in the midst of you:-I mean with St. Paul, that Charity of God, which is poured into out hearts, by the Holy Spirit which is given to us :- In a word, I mean the same mystic waters of religiousnels, which my Saviour meaned and promised to his faithful followers (whether innocent as a John, or penitent as a Peter): He that believeth in me, says the divine JESUS, rivers of living waters shall flow out of bis entrails.—And left the ignorant, or fleshly-minded should cavil about the sense or propriety of the words here made use of by the fovereign Arbiter of language and eloquence, the evangelist immediately explains them in the very same mystic sense I here humbly copy from my divine Original : This he fpoke (fays St. John) of the spirit, which the believers in him were to reit in his name, I will pour fort sories

AFTER this declaration then built on fuch divine Authority, I prefume, that the most illiterate will have no room to plead ignorance of what I mean in this discourse M m 2 by

by the waters of inward purity; nor the most perverse any colour for charging me with fanaticism, affectation, or impropriety, in applying this form of expression, in the allegoric sense it really bears, to that spiritual cleanness of heart, which is alike infused into the souls of the Righteous, either by the grace of baptism, or by the grace of

repentance.

Thus much then established, it is evident beyond the reach of doubt, that those happy fouls, whom baptismal or penitential grace, has placed in this enviable state, can have no evils to dread from the death, judgment or hell of the reprobate, so long as they faithfully persevere to work and to keep that grace within them in a constant state of improvement. For the holy fear of God, which possesses them, is, while they steadily watch and follow its facred motions, a fure pledge against the like final evils: With him that feareth the Lord, it shall be well in the latter end, faith Ecclefiasticus, and in the day of his death be shall be bleffed; that is, after living thus the life of the godly, he shall die the death of such, and precious in the fight of God is the death of his faints: for it is a being transferred, through the falutary currents of mortality and judgment, to the blissful flood of God's eternal Love.

Now the reason of this desirable security of the diligent Righteous, is as plain and

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familiar as it is natural, though the causes of it be in themselves supernatural. fear of God then in the fouls of the Upright, whether they be Innocents or Penitents, is ever, by the infusion of the divine spirit, accompanied and strengthened with the supernatural gifts of faith, bope and charity: And thefe, if duly attended to, and preferved from decay, are impenetrable bulwarks against deadly sin, and all its fatal consequences: Ye, who fear the Lord, saith the divine writer, believe in him; and your reward shall not fail.—Ye, who fear the Lord, hope in him; and mercy shall come to you for your enjoyment:—Ye, who fear the Lord, love him; and your hearts shall be enlightened. Nothing therefore can be more evident, than that the Godly both Innocents and Penitents, while they affiduously watch and work to keep and improve the holy fear of God, and the paradile of grace which is planted within them, can have nothing to dread from the final evils themselves which are referved for the wicked.

It is true (oh Righteous Souls!) that during this life, you are perpetually surrounded with unnumbered temptations of every kind; which, besides laying constant open siege to your hearts from without, hold a treacherous correspondence with your native concupiseence within; for ever on the watch to surprise your souls; for ever ready to take ad-

vantage

vantage of every the least inconstancy or inadvertence on your part, to destroy the paradife of grace in your breafts. But not even these insidious evils ought to terrify or dismay you; so long as you faithfully persist in obeying the motions and dictates of a holy filial fear of that divine Parent and Lord, whose holy spirit it is that abides within you, to animate, to confole and to strengthen you against every attack. For says the Almighty by his prophet, No barms shall befall bim, who feareth the Lord; but in temptation God will keep him and deliver him from evils. What room then (oh happy fouls!) have you for dejection or despondency? If God is with us, who shall be against us? Take courage then, my beloved; and fight manfully unto the end. Suffer neither the death, the judgment nor the hell of finners to weaken your lively hopes of heaven. Improve your filial fear of God and banish all presumption on your own strength. Be constant in humbling yourselves under his powerful hand, and reflect with Saint Paul, that No Man can do aught that is good of himself: no, nor avoid doing any kind of evil, nor even so much as invoke God's affistance to avoid it, or fay, Lord Jesus, but in the Holy Ghost. But then amidst your virtuous struggles; in all your tribulations and anxieties; whether by trials from without, or temptations from within,

let nothing shake your considence in him: Remembering still with the same apostle, that you can do all things in Him, who strengthens you; and that, as Ecclesiasticus says, the fear of the Lord sets itself above all things. Be then but faithful to that holy sear within you; and you will have nothing to dread besides. For says the great Vessel of election: God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond your strength; but will derive advantage to you from temptation, that

you may be able to endure it.

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HENCE by the bye it is easy to distin-guish the holy sear of the Lord which actuates the breafts of his Elect, from the impious dread, which, in spite of their hardness, agitates the fouls of the reprobate. It is certain that all created Beings endowed with intelligence are forced to stand in some fear of their awful Creator. But how infinite is the difference between the amorous fears of the Righteous and the difaffected terrors of the wicked! The fears of un-godly men, like those of demons, are the tremblings of mutinous flaves, who (as David with eloquent concileness says) feign to themselves labour in a precept. That is to fay, they perfuade themselves, that the eafy yoke of the divine commandments is an unwieldy burden. Wherefore looking upon God as an insupportable talk-master. they live in a constant habit of dreading

him and yet offending him. So that at the same time that their conscious guilt compels them to tremble at his merited wrath, the wilful deadness they feel within them of faith, hope and charity, emboldens them to multiply their offences in contempt of their terrors. It is no wonder then that the wicked in the midft of all their forced and unhallowed fears, still prefumptuously pursue the criminal gratification of their idolized appetites, like the reprobate inhabitants of Samaria, of whom in the fourth of Kings the facred Historian says, Those people were indeed fearing God, but never-

theless were ferving their idols also.

On the contrary the fear of the Godly is a confident reverence of fond and grateful children towards their beloved indulgent Parent and God: It is a dread of his difpleasure rather than of his chastisements: It is a filial awe which makes them lefs apprehensive of his frowns than of the offence they are marks of, and more eager to deserve and poffess his love, than the bleffings which flow from it. And this filial fear of God which animates the innocent and penitent Righteous (being constantly refreshed with the mystic waters of inward purity, that is, fortified with the facred unction of faith, hope, charity and all the other gifts of the divine spirit within them) is incessantly bringing-forth new fruits of Christian vir-

tue and piety; which, according to the divine promise in Isaiab, spring-up among the berbs (that is, as the Fathers understand the words, appear in all their actions) as plentifully as willows by the fide of running waters. Bleffed therefore is He, to whom it is given to bave this fear of the Lord. Bleffed indeed! for as the plalmift bears witness, He shall be like a tree, that is planted by rivers of water, that bringeth-forth its fruit in its proper feafon: His leaf alfa (the glorious reward of his actions) shall not wither ! And with this immense difference from wicked men, that, while They, like chaff that is driven before the wind, shall not stand in judgment, nor be able to bear (in conjunction with the Good) the aweful presence of their all-discerning Judge, He (the righteous Man) shall stand with unshaken serenity, and what soever be doeth shall prosper.

THOUGH then the impenitent wicked have every reason to dread and expect in death, judgment and hell, the severest effects of God's avenging justice; You (oh righteous Innocents and Penitents!) have none of those evils to dread: having happily within you his holy fear and love for pledges of your safety, so long as you faithfully persevere to cultivate them. According therefore to the advice of Saint Paul to the Hebrews and in them to Us, with perseverance let us approach to God in a true N n

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beart in fulness of faith, baving our bearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our body washed with CLEAN WATER. - In other words to the same purport: "Let us be affi-" duous to work and to keep the paradise of " grace, which is in us, every day more and " more improved with the mystic waters of " inward purity, by resolutely guarding our " fouls from inward guilt and our bodies " from fenfual indulgence: And we must " be safe." Let us, with the apostle, bold fast the confession of our unwavering hope (for He is faithful who has promised) and let us confider one-another to our mutual incitement to charity and good works. Yes: let us cherish our filial fear of God with practical confidence in his promised affistance: And not content with being good Ourselves, let us promote charity and good actions in our Neighbours, by our exemplary conduct void of all motives of vain glory: And however terrible be the death, judgment and hell of impenitent finners, We ourfelves can have no cause of dejecting and desponding dreads from those final evils. For those very evils, which will prove to hardened reprobates fo many bitter sources of irreparable ruin; if we make a proper use of them towards strengthening the fear and love of God already within us, will become fo many additional helps towards our everlafting Security. The flood of Death, bitter as its waters

ters must be to Them, will be sweet and full of consolation to Us: The tremendous deluge of Judgment, embittered as it will be to Them by a forced restitution of the just awe they have renounced of their offended God, will be sweetened to Us by the recovery of that honour peace and fafety, we have had so often and so cruelly disturbed in this life: And the horrible abyss of threefold desolation, which will eternally overwhelm Their fouls with unmingled gall, will only ferve to enhance by comparison the exquisite sweetness of that everlasting bliss We now aspire to, and shall one day be put in full possession of. You therefore (oh righteous Christians!) instead of having any room to be cast-down or dejected by the confideration of those final evils, have every reason to draw from them matter of consolation to yourselves, by reflecting on the very different fruits you have in your power to draw from them.

Now this difference of fruits, which those tremendous evils are productive of to the Good and the Bad, are remarkably prefigured to us in two distinct passages of Holy Writ. When Jonah wickedly perfifted in revolting from his maker's command, we are told by the prophet himfelf, that the Lord caused him to be swallowedup alive by an enormous whale: Which, in the judgment of divines and even of

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Fonab.

Yonab, was a type of the hell, prepared for unrepenting finners. But no fooner was Yonab reinstated in God's favour by cordial repentance; no fooner did he apply again to his offended maker with filial fear and confidence, than the very fame monster, which was destined to destroy him, if contumacious to the last, was made a means of his fafety, when penitent. I cried out of my tribulation to our Lord-out of the belly of bell I cried, and thou haft beard my voice, fays the prophet. Yes: for our Lord spake to the fifth, which he appointed to chastife the obstinate criminal; and caused it, by vomiting-up Jonah upon dry land, to become a means of fafety to the converted rebel. In like manner that horrible death, judgment and hell, which God in the rigour of his justice has destined for the chastisement of unyielding Sinners, are also by his ineffable mercy appointed incentives to promote the fanctification, and glory of the Righteous; if These are but careful to make a proper and faithful use of them.

But the most striking figure of this confoling truth we have in the xivth. of Exodus: Where we find, that God, being refolved to deliver the Ifraelites from the bondage of Egypt, led them forth from it through the defart, and a cross the red sea in a strong and mighty hand. For when the Egyptians close behind were pursuing them

them with vehemence, He interpoled a pillar of fire to darken their way and stop their pursuit, while it served as a Beacon to the terrifyed fugitives, to lead them on; and then dividing the waters, He made an opening in the heart of the fea, for the people to pass through on the dry land; after which they united again and involved Pharaob and his whole army in one common ruin : Thus manifesting at one juncture with a twofold miracle the rigour of his justice, and the tenderness of his mercy. But what is most singular in this portentous event, and particularly applicable to our present purpose, is, that the very identic fiery pillar, with which God parted the Egyptians from the children of Ifrael, was at one and the fame time a cloud of impenetrable darkness to his enemies and a luminous planet to direct his chosen friends on their way; and that the felf-fame divided flood, which was destined to be the common grave of the former, was (fays the facred historian) as it were, a wall to the latter on their right band and their left. Now what, I befeech, was this but a most manifest figure of God's ineffable wisdom; which, reaching from end to end strongly and disposing all things sweetly, has, with fuch wondrous justice and mercy, disposed, that the very same final horrors of death, judgment and hell, that are destined to effect the ruin of the unrepenting

ing Wicked, shall be the useful means of promoting the confolation and spiritual advancement of the Righteous? And fuch indeed they must be; if These but faithfully persevere in drawing from the frequent ferious remembrance of them constant recruits of inward purity, towards cherishing their filial fear and confidence in him. And therefore it is, that, by the mouth of his prophet, he directs them fo to do: Remember your

last things; and ye shall never fin.

IT is plain then (oh pious fouls, who are struggling forward in the paths of virtue ! - striving to serve God because you fear him, and chiefly fearing him because you love him!) that You have happily no cause to be dejected with what I have faid to unrepenting finners concerning death, judgment and hell. Your aim is virtue and Your defire is God and his heaven. He therefore, who kindled these affections in you, will, if you faithfully perfift in feeking him, accomplish your pious wishes. His never-failing truth and pro-mise are engaged to do it. The same eternal Verity, who tells prefumptuous finners. that the defire of the wicked shall perish, expressly avers to You, that the hopes of the Just are gladness, and the wishes of the Righteous will be granted. What then have You to dread from the punishment of evil-doers? Let Those, who delight in evil, quake and tremble 2

tremble: Not Ye, who hold it in abhortence. No: You, if you persevere, must needs be safe beneath the wing of his protecting Love. For, as the prophetic monarch says, the Lord will not leave the rod of the wicked to the lot of the Righteous, nor suffer the Good to stretch-forth their hands to

iniquity.

DEARLY beloved fellow Christians then ! You in the first place, whose souls are yet unstained with deadly guilt! And some such I dare to hope there are among you. You then, I fay, oh enviable fouls, who happily have hitherto preserved untainted your baptifmal grace! what cause can you alledge for dejection, or despondency? what room have you to be dismayed by the death, judgment, or hell of hardened finners; perfifting as you do in hating and avoiding deadly fin? For as Eliphaz faid to Job, so may I fay to you :- Reflect a little, I befeech you; and point me out an instance, if you can: When was the Innocent ever left to perish to eternity? or when was the Upright ever suffered to be cut-off? And in the next place, You, oh dear loved Christians, who heretofore were finners; but now (thank heaven) are no longer fo ! what have You to do with the terrors of the hardened wicked? You, through God's preventing grace with your co-operation, have repented in good time. You waited not till your repentance

pentance became a forced one; but fincere? ly freely and with all your hearts returned to God in time and fought his mercy: Had even Judas done as much, he might have died a glorious apostle.-You have wept your fins: You still bewail them; still detest them; and shun the occasions of them; You are doing voluntary penance and defirous rather to die than offend your God again. You then are entitled to the gracious promise he made you by the mouth of Zachariah his prophet: Return to Me; faith the Lord; and I will return to You, faith the Lord. Nay you are already in possession of that promise. You (like the gospel-prodigal) of your own accord have accepted the preventing mercy of your offended Jesus, to return to him: And the offended, but forgiving Jesus has chearfully received you to his favour. He has revested you with the nuptial Garment of his grace; He has kindly re-admitted you to his holy table; He has regaled you with the bread of life, his precious body and blood: And now He lives again in You, and You in Him. There is no damnation then for You, while you faithfully perfevere in this bleffed state. No, says St. Paul: There is no damnation for them, who are in Christ So long then as you stand firm in your good purposes: So long as you persist in striving and watching and praying, that you

To the STEADY RIGHTEOUS.

you enter not again into temptation; You have nought to dread from God's exasperated wrath against unyielding sinners. Had He delighted in Your ruin, he would not have needed to call you to repentance: He justly might have left you to your own perversity. But as I live, faith the Lord (by Exekiel his servant) I bave no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather in that he turn from his evil ways and live. This you have happily effected: And therefore, provided you take faithful care never to return again, like the dog to his vomit (as the scripture expresses it) the death of finners, the judgment of finners, the hell of finners are not made for You.

But, methinks, I hear some timorous Penitent cry-out, in the words of David—
alas! my iniquities bave laid bold of me, infomuch that I cannot look-up: They are multiplied above the bairs of my head: So
that my heart has for saken me. How then beneath so unwieldy a load shall I avoid being dejected? which way shall I think of the punishment of sinners and not quake with despondency for myself?"
Which way, do you ask? I will tell you, beloved: Think of them just as repenting David did. Compare the multitude of your sins with the greater multitude of God's mercies: Reslect, that, however great be

the number and weight of your past of-fences, God's truth and mercy are immensely greater: And withal remember, that heinous as those fins were, thanks to the divine mercy, you have repented of them, and are resolved to atone for them by your future virtuous conduct: And happily for You, your eternal welfare depends not upon the inexorable tyrant, Man. What, tho' with wretched man, no reformation, no number, eminence or steadiness of posterior virtues will suffice to obliterate or atone for one youthful flip, one indifcretion of a green and thoughtless time of life; nor any repentance or amendment ferve to appeafe him? Not fuch the disposition of the God You ferve. He is a God of clemency: who requires no more than that you repent for love of Him, and persevere in your repentance; as he tells you by the mouth of his prophet: Make you clean, fays the Lord: and though your fins be as scarlet, they shall become white as fnow. God promises, for a recompence to your repentance, to whiten your finful lives to innocence? what more can infinite Goodness say to encourage you? He not only gave the repentance you enjoy and promises to reward your fidelity in it, but he offers his affistance to render you faithful. What more can infinite Love be wished to do, towards deserving all your conficience?

confidence? Why do you doubt, or despond then? oh ye of little faith! Wherefore should You, with such an Assistant be at all dismayed, oh christian Innocents and Penitents? why hesitate one single instant to put your whole trust with unshaken sirmness in that all-gracious Lord, who gives you such substantial proofs of his unwearied bounty? With Ecclesiasticus then I beseech you, Children, look round the nations of men; and know ye, that none hath ever hoped in our Lord and been confounded.

" All this is true (perhaps you will re-" ply) and I should never be dejected by the " remembrance of my former fins; was " I but happily exempt from all their " fatal influence. But alas! in spite of all " my good purposes and efforts, I still con-" tinue miserably weak; still daily stumble " into faults: And though I daily try to " rife again and struggle forward, I still " keep stumbling-on."—This, I confess is a painful situation for All, who love and labour to please God. It is indeed (oh righteous Souls!) fufficient matter to keep You humble and augment your filial fear of God and diffidence of yourselves: But yet, it is no cause for terror or despondency. If God, towards faving you, indispensably required you to be impeccable; he would have made you fo. And fince he has not, 002

all he requires is, that you live in a constant disposition to improve in the holy sear of Him; that you love him above all things with all your souls; and love his creatures for his fake : detefting All that can displease him, and aspiring to the perfect practice of All that is pleasing to him. In short all he effentially demands of you is your heart: My child (says He to every one of you) give me your beart. Giving him That, you give him all you have to give; and all he chiefly covets of you. Giving him That, his mercy will perfect the gift to his liking. Give him therefore That: And you will find the pfalmist's words verified in you,that the Lord is merciful and gracious, flow to anger and plenteous in mercy. You will find, that, be will not deal with You (oh Innocents!) - after the rate and measure of your fins of frailty': Nor will repay You (oh Penitents!) -- according to your past iniquities. You will find on the reverse; that far as the east is from the west, he will remove your transgressions from you; and that, like as a father pitieth bis children, so doth the Lord pity them who fear him, with a truly filial fear. For He knoweth Our frame and remembereth that We are dust. Yes: he knows that your nature is but weak and has his impenetrably gracious motives for fuffering it to be fo. May

May not his Mercy, peradventure, permit Your present weakness (oh Innocents!) on purpose to make you more watchful, and less confident; to guard you from greater fins, and fave you from spiritual pride, the worst and most destructive kind of pride? On purpose (I mean) to make you sensible, how wretched you would be without his grace, fince even with its aid, you are still fo feeble? And may not the fame paternal Tenderness (oh Penitents!) with the same bounteous view permit You also still to feel returning fymptoms of your native milery?-partly to chaftise thereby your former folly; and partly to encrease your future enmity to fin, by fuffering you to feel at times the loathsome relics which This generally leaves behind of looking back with this of to beat

But whatever be his ineffable purpose in permitting it; it still behoves You to strive against it, without mistrustful murmurs or desponding doubts of the goodness of that sovereign Being, who permits it. It still behoves You to keep struggling-on, with humble chearfulness, religious fear and cordial considence. And the more you are sensible of your weakness, the more it is incumbent on you to be perpetually upon your guard against surprise; that you may always be in readiness (as often as you stumble and lose ground) to rise, fetch breath,

breath, and struggle-on again; like persons climbing-up a steep and craggy mountain. What, though they often flip, get-up, and flip again? It is by very dint of many a recovered loss of ground (from inadvertent stumbles) that they gradually acquire the art to advance with steadiness and reach at last the summit. Instead then of suffering your present weakness to dispirit you, refolve with St. Paul, to glory in your infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell within you. That is to fay, humbly confeffing, that all you are is impotence, build your whole confidence on God, your only strength; and banishing all pusillanimous mistrust, say with the apostle, I can do all things in him, who strengthens me. Inflead of looking back with flavish horror on the Precipice you have escaped, look forward with comfort on the Mercy which has faved you, and thankfully cry-out to God with David :- how great is the multitude of fweetness, ob Lord, which thou hast boardedup for those, who fear thee. In a word, inflead of suffering the Death, Judgment and Hell of finners to damp your fervor, redouble that fervour by comparing Them with the fubstantial bliss prepared for you in Heaven, if you are faithful to the end.

IT is certain then, oh innocent and penitent Righteous, that your being so exempts

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you not from fometimes thinking on those final evils of the wicked. No: rather it behoves ye to recollect them often, that you may draw from Them fresh supplies of vigour to improve within you the mystic waters of inward purity; that you may fortify with perseverance your filial fear and confidence in God. And therefore fays the Lord by his prophet: Remember your Last Things and you shall never sin. God has planted in your hearts a spiritual paradise of grace, to the fame beneficent end for which be put man into the paradife of pleafure, namely, to work and to keep it. He deigns to water it with the fingle mystic river, the life-giving fountain of a holy fear of Him: And he expects that You industriously co-operate with Him towards ftrengthening that facred stream, by drawing frequent recruits of fervour from the four important heads into which it is now divided. Think often then on the death, judgment and hell prepared for hardened finners: Yet think not on them with the horror of disaffected slaves, that tremble at the scourges of a tyrant whose hated yoke they groan beneath; but with the subjection of fond and grateful children, who, when they eye the rod, are less afraid of it as an instrument of smart, than as a token of their parent's displeasure. Think on them, to adore his Justice in the punishment of finand

and his Mercy in guarding you from both. Think too with joy on that river of delights, that blissful Heaven, prepared to recompence the Virtuous. Think, hope and figh incessantly for That, not so much, from the fordid principle of hirelings, because it is profitable to yourselves, as from the nobler motive, that there you will forever love and adore and praise your sovereign Benefactor. Keep that delightful prospect always in your thoughts, to prop your weakness, to animate your constancy, to improve your love and fear of God, and to encrease your confidence in Him. And in whom shall you confide so safely as in Him, who has your eternal welfare more at heart than You have it yourselves? You did not create that heaven for yourselves: He did. You have not purchased it with your blood: He has: And died a painful shameful death to make it yours forever. He on his cross had every one of You as present in his divine mind, as the whole world together. And had but One of you wanted his redemption; he would have died as chearfully for that only One, as he did for all mankind. Judge then if God defires not your endless happiness infinitely more than You do; and whether, if you be faithful to the end in co-operating with Him to fecure it, you may not look on Heaven as already yours.

To the STEADY RIGHTEOUS. 245

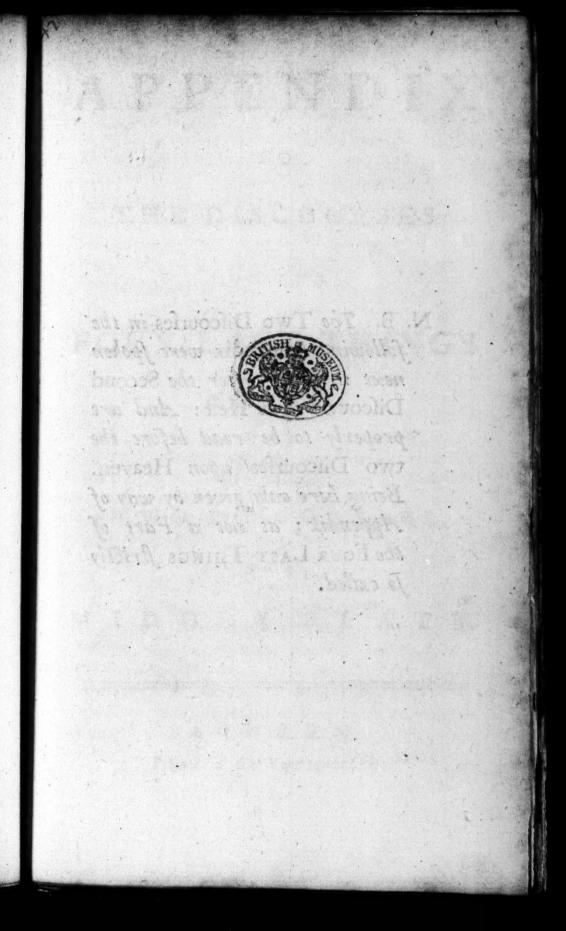
To conclude then, my beloved: Although, while you continue to cling to God, you have nothing to dread from the final evils of the hardened Wicked; be diligent to draw thence frequent recruits of inward purity to fortify your filial Fear of Him. And chearfully pressing-on to your native Heaven, deem it your own; and wifely make it so, by resolving with St. Paul, that neither life nor death, nor any other creature, Shall separate you from the LOVE of God in Christ Jesus. Thus you will anfwer your divine Benefactor's gracious defign in planting within you a paradife of baptismal or penitential grace; namely, as my text fays, to work and to keep it. And thus the mystic river of divine fear (that fountain of life) after watering and enriching your inward paradife with every christian virtue, will bear back all your affections into the abyss of uncreated Love, whence it first issued-forth. So that then all your fears and hopes and wishes will be sweetly immersed in a boundless ocean of UNIVERSAL, EVER-For then You will LASTING HAPPINESS: forever be feasted and rejoiced in the presence of God: Who will be himself Your immense Reward.

Which, &c.

To the Serady Right Louis, 245

To constitute them, my beloved : Altheorem, while you don't not to ching to Code lead our more hash or pridate town boy cruis of the headened Wilded ; he different tendent to their majorit reners with the the second take took which has of which And chessively pretting-on, is pair native treatent from it were own; and wilder that we will be done not not any other endered the secretary supplies the secretary Ger in the Molecular way and the same trees your case to the Menchant of grandords. then in placement within you a paradia of basilisted the spitestial error of health, and And its was it has been an armital for 12 JY 62 graduliada elicaberação en decidada de acomo de la como dela como de la como qual anni Tetta to w De doad at million, autaly the abyte de la commencial construit in the angle of tine sign may it made sent to a direct bailt the commentation of Arthreshow has excel-This was a same of the same and a system. Cast 1501 to the cast of the their Toronte and AND SALES OF THE PARTY OF THE P Marine Washingt to Line of there were fell

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N. B. The Two Discourses in the following Appendix were spoken next in order after the Second Discourse upon Hell: And are properly to be read before the two Discourses upon Heaven. Being here only given by way of Appendix; as not a Part of the Four Last Things strictly so called.

APPENDIX

TO

THE DISCOURSES

ONTHE

FOUR LAST THINGS

OF MAN:

Containing

TWO DISCOURSES

ONA

MIDDLE STATE.

LONDON:
Printed in the Year MDCCLXIII.

APPENDIX

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THE DISCOURSES

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WIND DISCOURSES

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THE TORRENT OF THORNS:

First Discourse on a Mid-State.

more have we to do henceforth, than to forth

A river issued out of the place of pleasure; to water Paradice; which thence is divided into four Heads: (Gen. ii. 16.) And a fountain shall issue out of the house of the Lord; and shall water the torrent of thorns. (Joel iii. 18.)

FTER spiritually wading with our reflections through the tremendous flood of hell, it is a comfort to look back and see all the difficulties of our mystic navigation furmounted. Yes: There is now an end to all matter of gloomy apprehension. The Fear of the Lord, that fountain of life, has led our meditations through the three grand sources of our just alarms. And furely the bare remembrance of fuch horrors as we have discovered in death, judgment and hell, must amply fuffice to strengthen that fear with persevering fervor, and render all deadly guilt as hideous to our thoughts, as those complicated horrors can possibly be. If so; the friendlier stream of death, I trust, will in the end wast us strait to eternal fafety. If so; even the bitter flood

flood of judgment will be changed for us into a fruitful fource of endless sweets: And if so; we may fairly bid defiance to bell and all its desolations: If so, in a word; farewell to all gloomy thoughts for the future. For, what more have we to do henceforth, than to sooth our fond wishes, by launching, with anticipating thought, into the only remaining flood we have to fathorn, the river of heaven I mean; that abyse of life, which flows from the throne

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Thus, in a kind of contemplative dream, was I raising my dejected spirits after my last discourse; and already, as it were, tacking about my anxious mind with a prosperous gale of christian confidence: when (alas!) just on the point of steering my eager fancy full fail into that enchanting river, or rather ocean, of joys, the heaven we are made for; how did I find myself (methought) like most other way-farers in this tempestuous world, sadly mistaken in my reckoning! For lo! a neighbouring und thought of channel (somewise like the Medway) to the Thames) opening to my unexperienced view, shuts up for the present the entrance of that blissful stream. And behold! while I stand agast at my too late discovered mistake, instead of anchoring as I proposed in a river of blifs, I find myfelf in a manner fast aground in a thorny torrent of forrow! a painful shallow, where, for want of a more scrupulous calculation beforehand, too many christian travellers

vellers towards heaven are likely to flick for a time, till a fountain shall issue out of the house of the Lord, to water that torrent of thorns.

But, oh my God! is it possible, that chriftian fouls, once fafe from the dreadful floods of death, judgment and hell, may have aught belide to fear beyond the grave ?- aught to retard their joyous entrance into heaven? - ah yes! - As fure as God is merciful and just, so furely there is and must be an intermediate channel between the flood of hell and that of heaven .- Or (to leave a while the figure for the letter) there is and must be a middle-state in the other world, between eternal pains and everlasting joys. Call it a purgatory, or tranfient place of sufferance: call it a place of temporary expiation, or suspension from determined blifs: or call it by any other name which pleafes best: the truth is still the same. There must be a middle stare beyond the grave of temporary atonement for fuch of God's departed elect, as, being free from deadly guilt, launch into eternity not wholly cleanfed in this life from every moral stain: A state, in which they must remain till they have totally satisfied their loving God's impartial justice by their own fufferings, or by the charitable interventions of the furviving faithful in their be-half; — either (I fay) by their own thorny forrows in that vale of suspence, or by the fountain of charitable succours, which shall iffue out of the house of the Lord (the congregation food with us the needs to excipte their uns

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of living christians) to water their torrest of

SCRIPTURE, Tradition, and fober unblased Reason, if we suffer them to guide us, will lead us strait on to that dolorous flat. Thither then, revered christians, after These, let us steer our attentive thoughts for the prefent; that, viewing the diffressful state of such of God's departed favourites as are stranded there, their sufferings may awaken all our piety to their relief, and all our circumspection to our own security. From the three immediately preceding fubjects I have discoursed upon, it is plain, that death, judgment and hell, are three very terrible floods; because the first is a mystic affemblage of the bitter waters of contradiction; the fecond is a mystic junction of the bitterer was ters of restitution; and the third, a mystic and eternal confluence of the most bitter waters of threefold desolation. And now I hope to make it full as plain, that the Middle-State of departed fouls detain'd in fuspence between hell and heaven; though it be (if I may be indulged the figurative expression) a kind of bye-channel, and a fafe one in the main, is an extremely painful torrent of forrows for the time. noving a specimen of the relation of

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ALMIGHTY Lord of boundless bounty, who, notwithstanding all the rigour of thy impartial Justice, hast destined the most desective of thy deceased elect to reign at last eternally with thee; and hast mean time intrusted with us the means to expiate their unatoned

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toned transgressions; exert thy farther mercy in their behalf. Enlighten the minds of christians to comprehend the truths I am about to utter, and warm their hearts to the charitable succour of thy departed suffering Saints, and the improvement of their love and fear of thee.

UNLESS we wilfully that our eyes, revered Auditors, to the faving lights of Holy Writ; we cannot help feeing, that there is and must be beyond the grave, a Middle-State between: hell and heaven. They who were raised from the dead by Elias and Elista, as well as the youth of Naim, the beloved Lazarus, and all those, whom the divine Jesus restored to life: hoth before his bleffed death and during the fame, are so many speaking evidences of it. For during their detention in the other world, none of these were either in hell, or in heaven.-Not in hell; for there (as I have elfewhere proved) there is no redemption. - And not in beaven: for there, as the royal pfalmist witnesses, the Lord will not suffer the righteous to be diffurbed. Of course then the other world admits of a Middle-State, which is neither hell nor heaven. To this indeed it may poffibly be answered, that those souls are supposed to have existed, during their absence from this life, in the Limbo of the patriarchs, where all

See Sermon (with a Preface in Answer to Mr. Whistan), printed in 1742, under the following Title. Eternal Misery the necessary Consequence of infinite Mercy abused.

the elect of the old law were detained, till Christ, the first-born of the dead, led their captivity captive after him to his celestial kingdom: And most divines agree, that the Middle-State of the old law, that is, the Limbo of the Fathers, expired with their deliverance at our Lord's ascension. This therefore cannot be a fufficient argument to prove a Middle-State in the new law, the law of grace. It is very true, Christians: This alone cannot be such; neither do I mean, that it should. - No, all I mean to draw from thence is the clear demonstration, that, it is neither impossible, nor repugnant to faith, or common-sense, that souls departed from this life, be for a time detained in the other world in a separate state, which is neither hell, nor heaven: - that it is neither abfurd nor inconfistent with the ideas we ought to entertain of God's impartial justice, Mercy, Truth and Love to his elect; nor incompatible with the undoubted right of These to eternal glory (in virtue of God's gracious promise) for some of them to be punished after death with a temporary fuspension from that glory. For here, we see, that the persons I' have mentioned, though dead to this world, neither went to hell nor heaven; or they could not have returned from thence, as I before obferved. So in like manner Adam, Abel, Noah, Moses, Abraham, David, and many other fathers of the old law, though canonifed in Holy Writ for faints and favorites of God, died indeed

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deed in the Almighty's grace and favour; and therefore (in virtue of his faithful covenant) were not only fafe from the abyss of hell, but entitled also to the endless possession of himself in heaven: Yet were they nevertheless deprived for ages after death of his beaufying prefence, and retained in a Middle-State, which was not either the hell of the damned or the heaven of the bleffed. Indeed in that State. they were perfectly at rest from all anxieties. with regard to their eternal fafety; and probably at rest too from every sensitive pain: At least we have no revelation to the contrary. But then it is felf-evident, that (their yearnings after God, their fovereign Good, being inceffant and intense, till they were put in posfession of him by their Redeemer Christ) they did, and naturally must, during their detention, fuffer that pain and anguish in the spirit which is inseparable from vehement defire while ungratified. Whether then the painful vehemence of their yearnings after God was a punishment entailed upon their original guilt only, or appointed also to purify them from any failings of their own not fufficiently atoned for By themselves on earth; is no wife material to enquire at prefent, as not regarding our present subject. Enough it is for our intent, to find thus manifest to all men (who are not refolved to shut their eyes to every truth, they once have undertaken to oppose) that even in the old law, the elect

and peculiar favorites of God, and persons who, as such, were destined to eternal glory, could be, and were in fact, with-held for forme time after death from the enjoyment of that glory, in a state of anxious suspence, and consequently of pain in some degree: and this without the least derogation from God's eternal truth and mercy, or from their own eternal happiness. Where then is the absurdity of believing the fame with regard to God's imper-

feet favorites in the law of grace?

WITHOUT a Middle-state for departed Christians, whither could Tabitha and Eutichus have gone after their first death? for (as we read in the ixth and xxth of the Acts of the apostles) both these expired, for the first time, after the commencement of the law of Christ: and both were, like the former persons raised again to life; - the one by St. Peter, the other by St. Paul. Where then could the fouls of thefe be in the other world during the fpace of time between their departures out of This, and their returns to it again? Not in the Limbo or Middle-state of the patriarchs; for That, as we have observed, was then abolished: And certainly not in hell, nor heaven, for the reasons before affigned. Where else then could they be but in a Middle-State of the new law, which was neither a place of eternal mifery, nor of endless happiness; but a place in which they were free from the former,

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SAINT Paul in his first epiftle to the Corinthians exprelly tell us, that none can lay another foundation than that of Christ: that the day will come, when every man's work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try of what fort it is; and finally that they, who have built on that divine foundation with no other matter than gold, fiver and precious stones (that is only with holy deeds) shall receive their recompence: whereas they, who shall have added wood and bay and flubble (that is to fay, a mixture of faulty actions) [ball fuffer damage by the burning of their works, but fall be faved themselves, yet so as by fire. Now it is visible to all, who read this text with candour, that the apostle here speaks of none but God's elect. For on one hand, none else can be said to build on Christ with gold, filver and precious stones; and on the other hand, he tells us, that even they who indifcreetly add thereto the wood, boy and stubble of imperfect works, Shall nevertheless be faved, which none but the elect will be. Again it is equally manifest from the same text, that though all these will finally be saved, both they and their works must first be purified by a refining fire. Where then can this be done, but in a Middle-state of temporary expiation? It is plain that it cannot be done in heaven: for nothing that wants refinement, as being of course impure, can be admitted

there:—Nothing unclean, says our Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Neither is it feasible in hell; for St. Paul expressly says, they shall be saved: whereas all who once enter hell are lost beyond redemption, and doomed together with their wretched works to burn there without end, and still remain as foul as ever.

Farther this facred truth is taught by Christ himself in the xiith of St. Matthew; where speaking of the fin against the Holy Ghost (which most divines suppose, and not without good grounds, to fignify in this passage, by way of excellence, the fin of final impenitence he expresly declares, with an emphatically severe distinction of it from all other fins, that it shall neither be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come. If then we allow the author of all fense and elocution to have himself expressed his meaning on this occasion with propriety and sense, we must forcibly conclude from the foregoing words, that there are other fins, which may be and are forgiven in the other world. For, who is so void of understanding, as not to see, that, if all sins were excluded from pardon beyond the grave, our Saviour, in declaring with fuch emphatic stress, that the fin against the Holy Ghost (distinctly from all other sins) shall neither be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come, would have employed a most idle superfluity of words, unprecedented in his facred converfations.

fations and derogatory from his godlike wisdom? a superfluity not meerly idle, but even deceptive in its natural tendency; by making his hearers naturally inser (as we with reason do) that there really are sins forgiven in another world. For it is a maxim universally received, and instilled into us by the light of reason, that, within one same specific sphere of government and subjection, every positive excep-

tion establishes a rule to the contrary.

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I SAY, within one same specific Sphere of government and subjection.. Thus although an exception in the art of grammar infers no contrary rule in That of painting; nor on the reverse, because the spheres of government and subjection in those two unconnected arts are specifically different from each other; yet every express exception in the art of grammar effentially points out an opposite grammatic rule from which it deviates. And the same must be faid of the art of painting and of every science, art and system throughout nature: Which are all of them so many real, though seeble emanations from the omniscient fountain of all-confistent wisdom. The reason of this general economy, as appears from the very words of the above maxim, is, that every fuch exception and the opposite rule which it points-out are within one same identic sphere of regimen, and under the controll of the felf same specific system of governing principles.

Now, to bring this eternal and felf-proving maxim home to our prefent fubject, let us remember that Jesus Christ, God's co-eternal and co-equal for, effentially possessed, at the time of his speaking these words, as he still possesses and ever must possess, all power in heaven and on earth, that is to fay, in this world and the other. Confequently he had and has alike in both worlds all authority over fins and finners, to punish or to pardon them when and where and bow and in fuch wife proportions, as his equity and mercy might and may require. His fovereign power, wisdom, clemency and justice therefore being the governing principles of all the punishments and pardons, which are or can be given in either world to fins and finners; it follows of course, that every exception made by him in the distribution of those punishments and pardons implies and establishes a contrary rule. For both the exception and the rule that it implies are plainly subject to his divine controll; and move within the felf-same sphere of one divine authority. When therefore he pronuonces (as he does in St. Matthew) that the fingle fin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable both in this world and in the world to come; he must be understood to establish this contrary rule, that there are some sins and some degrees of sin susceptible of pardon, not only in this life, but also after death: The exception and the rule being perfectly subordinate to his almighty power, and alike in

in both worlds moving in one fame sphere of subjection to one divine controlling principle.

This argument, perhaps, will appear somewhat abstracted to such as are not accust tomed to the exercise of reasoning: Yet is it nevertheless persectly consonant to the practical sentiments of all mankind. In sact, every unbiassed mortal, capable of reasoning at all, whether learned or illiterate, is sure to draw from a like discourse a like inference; though every one may not be able to refund his conclusion into it's first principles; just as not every Englishman (though, without knowing it enough to read or write, he may speak the english language grammatically right) is able to resolve what he says into the principles of english grammar. However to make the matter clear to the meanest capacity, I shall add a familiar comparison not at all foreign to the present subject.

LET us suppose then, that the father of a numerous family makes this declaration. "I "will write to my other children: But to my son John I will not write neither du"ring my life, nor after my death." Now what would be the inference universally drawn from such a declaration? Why the very weakest as well as the wisest of men would all agree in pronouncing the protestation of not writing to John after his death to be a meer idle senseless superfluity of words: and not one creature would be found so stupid as to

conclude from thence, that he would therefore write to any of his other children after his death. And why but because every one would be fensible, that after his death he would no more remain in the same sphere of governing activity with regard to his children, or to the power of writing to them; nor his children be any longer subject to receiving letters from him.—But what if the same father possest of effects at his free disposal should declare :- " all my other children shall share in my effects: but my fon John shall have " no share in them, neither during my life, nor " after my death?" would not, must not every one understand from those words, that all his children (John excepted) are defigned to be sharers in their fathers substance; and that, if some of them were hindered by absence or otherwise from sharing in them during his life, they might claim a share in them after his decease? and wherefore This, but because, having the free and absolute power to appoint the disposal of his effects as well after death as before it, that power extends its influence equally over the two spaces of time before and after his decease: and consequently his exception of John, and the rule thereby established with respect to his other children, move in one sphere of subjection of their fortunes to his absolute authority, as parent and proprietor, and depend alike in both spaces on the same governing principle, in virtue of his living and dying

dying Will? and this is so obviously the natural sense of the above words, that, should the parent die with such a written Will and no other, all his children (John excepted) would in virtue thereof, be judged in every court of equity in the world, entitled to a share in their

deceased parent's effects.

IT cannot avail aught, to answer, that a parent, who uttered fuch a declaration might nevertheless intend, perhaps, to distribute his fubstance among his other children in his life time; or possibly might design to disinherit them all at his death. For in the first case, as of course there would be nothing at his death for any body to inherit; his exclusion of John from all inheritance after his demife, would be a gross and impertinent superfluity of words; and in the fecond, he would moreover be guilty of foul imposition on the rest of his children, by raising in them expectations which he intended to disappoint. Neither of which deformities can without blasphemy be supposed in Christ; and therefore neither supposition can be of use to invalidate the parity produced, as far as it relates to the doctrine in question.

MUCH less will it avail, to reply, that the parent at least might afterwards alter his mind. For, besides that it were the utmost excess of impiety to impute a like sickleness to the divine author of all truth, it is to be observed, that we are not talking of the natural dispositions either physical or moral of such a parent,

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but of the natural import of his words: which being (if, as behoves an honest man, he be fincere) the genuine images of his mind, they effentially express, not what he may do hereafter, but what he actually means to do, or cause to be done. And therefore from the above words, he cannot be understood without absurdity to mean otherwise than, that (John excepted) all his other children may hope for some share in his effects, either while he lives, or after his decease.

Thus in like manner therefore, when our bleffed parent Jesus (after declaring that all manner of fin (ball be forgiven unto men---) adds this exception-but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him NEITHER IN THIS WORLD NOR IN THE WORLD TO COME :- he must be understood to establish this contrary rule of christian faith, that, " there are some fins and some degrees " of every kind of fin (except the fin of final " impenitence, or uttering the last breath of " life with obstinate refistance to the grace of " the Holy Ghost) susceptible of pardon both " in this world and in the world to come." Nor is it possible without the blindest prejudice and abfurdity to take our Saviour's words in any other fense: This fin against the Holy Ghost being the only one excepted from pardon in both worlds, by the same divine personage whose sovereign power extended and extends tends over all degrees and kinds of fins and finners in the one and in the other.

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HERE then we have a legitimate proof from Christ's facred lips, that there are some fins and tome degrees of fin pardoned in the other world. Now this cannot take place in heaven; where, as we have feen, nothing that is unclean and wants forgiveness can have admittance, while in that condition. Neither can it take place in hell; for there there is no redemption, and therefore can be no forgiveness. There must then be, by our Saviour's testimony, some Middle-State beyond the grave, for the remission of such lesser sins, and moral debts, as have not been remitted, because not fufficiently expiated, in this world: And which though they be not fo heinous as to deferve eternal death, are still of weight enough to fuspend such of God's elect, as they are found in, from the immediate enjoyment of everlasting life.

THAT there really are such venial (or pardonable) debts, is manifest from the words of St. John in his first epistle: Where he distinguishes between the sinners we may lawfully pray for, and the sinners for whom we may not lawfully pray. — There is, says the apostle, a fin unto death; and there is a fin not unto death. Wherefore adds he, if any one pray; life shall be given to him, whose sin is not unto death. But I do not tell you to pray for That, which is unto death. Now it only is with re-

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gard to the DEAD, that the distinction can at all be lawfully made of finners for whom we may pray, and of finners for whom we may not pray. And even among the dead, the last fort are only fuch as have left behind them the most decisive proofs of their having died with final impenitence. For, as to living finners there are absolutely none (how great soever their crimes may be) but what we not only may, but are effentially bound, by the great law of charity, to pray for. Here then, Chriftians, is a fresh incontestable proof from Holy Scripture, not only that there must be a Middle-State, where imperfect Christians departed in a state of grace may want, and be susceptible of, pardon for fins not unto death, that is for venial (or pardonable) offences, whose nature or degree deserves not eternal chaîtisement; but also that they may (before themselves have totally paid the debt with a refining fire) obtain that pardon by the prayers and piety of the living faithful, which are as a fountain of charity issuing out of the bouse of the Lord, to water their torrent of thorny suspension.

Is time would permit me, without putting your patience to too severe a trial; I could enforce this orthodox truth with many other proofs from Holy Writ. I could even illustrate it with the testimony of Judas the Maccabee, who sent to Jerusalem 12,000 drachmas of silver; that sacrifice might be there offered-up for the departed souls of some of his army; whom, though

though they bravely stood-up for the cause of God, God nevertheless permitted to be flain in the very act of fighting his battle; because they had transgressed against a ceremonial part of the jewish law. For Judas did this, as the sacred Historian tells us, because be considered; that they, who had taken their sleep with godliness, had very good hope laid-up in flore for them. And therefore adds he:-It is a boly and a falutary thought to pray for the dead, that they may be released from their fins. But this is fo very clear and express a testimony of a Middle-State and the folidity of the Doctrine of Prayers for the dead, that the opposers of this charitable and consoling tenet, in order to elude its invincible strength, are reduced to have recourse to the desperate extremity, the poor and miserable shift of excluding the books of the Maccabees from the lift of canonical Scriptures. So very true it is, that one abyss brings-on another. It were eafy indeed to shew the idleness as well as guile of this paltry evasion, by proving the canonical authority of those facred writings, but that it would lead me too wide of my present purpose, only to illustrate a truth you already believe. To evade then all foreign disputes, I shall at present forbear to infift on this text as a scriptural argument of what, without any farther proofs, stands sufficiently evinced, to fatisfy every unbiased and ingenuous person. All the use then I intend to make of this pas-

fage is, just to observe in the first place, that the most obstinate opposers of the doctrine of a Middle-State are still forced to acknowledge, that the two books of Maccabees are a most venerable monument of ancient tradition: And fecondly, that confequently as fuch, they are of undeniable and unconquerable force to clear this doctrine at least from every imputation of Novelty, that stale and worn-out plea made use of at every pinch to throw dust in the eyes of the unlettered vulgar. For on one hand, by the practical consent of all Christian parties they have constantly been annexed to the facred writings of the Old Testament: And on the other, they have been acknowledged, by Doctor Perkins and other protestant divines of equal eminence, worthy to be preferred, in point of reverence, credit and authority, to all other human writings of the religious kind.

HERE then on one hand, we have a Book of fuch univerfally avowed antiquity, holinefs and aweful authority as to be esteemed by Christians of all denominations, worthy to be joined in one Volume with the unquestioned writings of the Holy Ghost, and preferred to every other human writing. And on the other, in this individual respectable monument of antiquity, we find, that a Middle-State and Prayers for the dead, taught (as we have seen) by Christ and his apostles, were believed and practised by God's Church long before

before the coming of Christ. Judge then, whether any Truth can have a more solid and illustrious testimony from Tradition, than This?

AND were I not confined to the narrow limits of a familiar discourse; I could produce a multitude of other unquestionable monuments from written Tradition, in every part of Christendom and every age of Christianity, to prove that the same has been the unvaried Faith and Practice of the Church ever fince the Coming of Christ. For, not to mention the antient Liturgies of St. Peter, St. Mark, St. Matthew and St. Andrew: Which, if they were not composed by those apostles, were at least in use in their time and in their respective Sees, and confequently under their venerable fanction :-Not to mention the antient Liturgies of the Latins, the Greeks, the Chaldeans, and Armenians; in all of which Prayers for the dead were expresly appointed: I could produce many Councils both provincial and general,as the third and fourth of Carthage in the fifth Century :- That of Chalcedon (one of the first four General Councils) in the same Century; in the third session of which Prayers for the dead are declared to be of ancient and received practice in the church :- Those of Bragara in the feventh century; of Florence in the fifteenth; and of Trent, in the fixteenth: which have positively defined it. And if all the Councils general, provincial and fynodal of the church

in every age have not expresly confirmed the fame; it was not for want of holding and practifing the fame unvaried article of faith, but for want of actual opposers of it, to make their fuffrage necessary. I could finally add the concurring testimony of the most authorised Fathers of the Greek and Latin church: In the multitude of whom are the illustrious names of a Tertullian, an Origenes, an Augustin, an Ambrose, a Nazianzen, a Bazil, a Hierome, a Chrisostom, a Cyril, a Theodoret, and a Gregory the Great. But wherefore the needless waste of oil to point-out the meridian Sun to men determined not to fee? There is no convincing the voluntary blind, till Heaven deign in its mercy to convert them.

INDEED, if we had not the resplendent lights of Scripture and Tradition to guide us; the bare light of Reason itself would afford us fubstantial motives of credibility, fufficient to bias us to the reception of this charitable doctrine; and might enable us to infer it from other infallible truths. As furely then as God is impartially just and merciful, so surely whoever dies in peace with him, by dying perfectly free from every mortal fin for fin unto death,) can never be damned: Because it is repugnant to his unalterable Justice and Goodness, that eternal punishment should be inflicted on any who do not deserve it; or that any one should be condemned to eternal death, who is not guilty of a fin unto death .-

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As furely as God is effentially equitable and true, fo furely, whoever dies with the stain of any fin on his conscience, not yet repented of and atoned for (though it be not a fin unto death) he neither will nor can enter into heaven, till he be purified from that stain, and satisfaction be made to God's majesty, which is thereby injured: Because it is repugnant to God's unbiased equity and truth, that any fin (how light foever) should go unpunished, or that any thing unclean should enter into the kingdom of heaven. ---- Now it were the utmost absurdity to suppose, that every one, who dies free from all mortal fin (or fin unto death) dies equally free from every venial (or pardonable) fin, which is not unto death. For in the first place, it cannot be denied, that the justest and most righteous of men daily fall into idle words and many other light fins, which escape their own observation; and which are not the less real for remaining hidden from those who commit them: Otherwise the inspired author of the psalms had not needed to pray against them : - from my bidden fins deliver me, oh Lord. And fecondly how many known fins and imperfections do we not daily see the best of men commit? such are light impatiences, flender breaches of charity, unsubstantial vanities, trivial unfincerities, and manifold unprofitable words and speeches, of which (as our Lord declares) we must render a minute account at the judgment-feat of God:

God: Sins, in a word, which all men, nevertheless, consider as of a light and venial (or pardonable) nature, that is, as fins not unto death. And yet the man, who is only guilty of fuch light offences, is as subject to sudden death, as those greater finners are, who have one or more deadly fins, or fins unto death on their conscience. They therefore, who are suddenly taken-off in such an imperfect state, before they have time to repent or atone for the like light offences, die (it is plain) in a state of fin, though not indeed of, fin unto death. For to imagine, that none ever die fuddenly, who are in fuch a state, were a senseless notion of the groffest kind, and would require a fonder more implicit credulity, than the profoundest mysteries of Christianity. In this case then, what must become of such a foul in the other world? It cannot go to hell, it is clear: Because God's mercy and justice forbid, that a foul not guilty of a fin unto death, should die eternally; And it is equally clear, that it cannot go immediately to heaven; because God's truth and his justice also forbid, that any thing unclean should enter there, or that any fin or degree of fin should go unpunished. Unbiased Reason therefore dictates, that there is and must be a Middle-State beyond the grave, which is neither hell, nor heaven; but a place, where the fins and imperfections of God's departed imperfect elect are expiated, either by their own fufferings, or by the prayers and

and other pious offices of the living faithful; that is (in the figurative language of the prophet foel in the fecond part of my text) either by the thorns of their own painful sufpence, during a time proportioned to the greatness and number of their pardonable offences, or by a fountain of fraternal piety isfaing out of the house of the Lord, the body of living Believers, to water their torrent of thorns.

IN FACT, to prefume on one hand, that, after death God will call his elect to a minute account for all their lightest failings, even to an idle word, as our Saviour has declared; and yet that he will require no fatisfaction for those failings, though neither atoned for, nor repented of in this life, where alone repentance can avail: Or to think on the other, that God, by his apostle (as we have seen) directs us to pray for fuch departed fouls as have died with the stain of fins not unto death, and adds the gracious promise, that life shall be given to such, if any man pray for them; and nevertheless to pretend, that the same just and true Being will neither require satisfaction at their hands, nor accept it at ours, were nothing better than rashly arraigning the wisdom, equity and veracity of God himself. For, if a soul, which departs out of this life to the judgment-feat of God, fullied only with light but still real fins, neither atoned for, nor repented of before death, is nevertheless to enter immeditely into E 2 heaven.

heaven, with the same celerity and ease as the most perfect innocents and penitents; what becomes of those divine attributes? what becomes of God's promise so often repeated by the mouths of his prophets, that be will render to every man according to his works? and where is the impartial nicety of his retribution, in the disposal of rewards and punishments?

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So very plainly do Scripture, Tradition, and unbiased Reason point out and establish this orthodox Truth, "that there is and must be "a Middle-State beyond the grave; a Third Place, which is neither hell nor heaven, (whatever be the name we give to it) for the reception of such of God's elect, as, though they die in the grace of God, and be consequently intitled to eternal hapminess, are nevertheless not sufficiently purished to be put in immediate possession of it.

AND now, revered Auditors, you may reafonably expect, that, after thus proving the existence of this Middle-State, I lead your attention on to a nearer prospect of it. And indeed it is what I intend to do, that I may give you some idea of the exquisite anguish endured by all, who are constrained to pass through it; and consequently of the vehement distress, which you yourselves (even should you, as I hope you will, die in a state of grace) are still exposed to suffer in the other world, if in this you make light of venial offences. For thus, by helping you to fee into the propriety of comparing the acute, though temporary fufferings of those afflicted souls to a Torrent of thorns, I hope, I shall so effectually excite your charitable compassion in their behalf, that you will litterally accomplish the figurative prophecy of Joel, by causing a fountain of fraternal piety to issue out of the house of the Lord, to water that mystical Torrent. And at the same time, I trust, that I shall thereby so thoroughly rouze your vigilance in your own behalf, that you will henceforth effectually provide against falling into the like mifery yourfelves. This however is a talk of too interesting a nature to them and to you, to be flighted and fuperficially performed: And therefore, that I may not trespass too far on your patience, I reserve it for my next discourse; when your faculties being relieved by sufficient repose, your minds will be readier to give due attention to a subject, which, you will find, richly deserves it all.

MEAN while, fince from what has been faid, it most clearly appears, that the least moral stain unatoned for in this life is sufficient to suspend the joys of God's elect in the next: And since the best of mortals are scarce exempt from some, and the very sew who are so, can only be so by incessant fasting, prayer and vigilance; let me conjure you, Beloved, to redouble your circumspection, in order to avoid for the suture every the least impersection which may retard your admission to the

the divine embraces, when you shall happily be delivered from the body of this death. Be no less assiduous also to bewail and expiate, by your prayers and tears and acts of felf denial, as well those hidden fins which have escaped your observation, as those known failings, which frailty or surprise may have drawn you into. Content not yourselves with labouring to escape the loss of God forever: But grudge to be deprived of him one fingle minute longer, than the stated time of your earthly exile makes inevitable. So infinite a treasure is the bliss, which is poffessed in God, that every single instant's privation of it is a loss of too immense a nature to be made up by any poffession (even if an eternal one were possible) of all the pleafures this paltry world could give. Think then no pains too many or too great to avoid fo vast, so infinite a waste. But make it your daily study to purify your souls from every stain, that can retard one moment your enjoyment of your unspotted heavenly Spouse. Make it the grand and favorite bufiness of your lives to enrich yourselves with every virtue and every ornamental gift of the Holy Ghost, that can endear you to him and advance you in his favour: That fince your gracious God is ever ready and defirous to unite you to himself, you may yourselves be always ready-vested with the nuptial garment to meet his divine embraces in the very instant of his calling you. To this end remember your last Things, and among them

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the Middle-State, the Mystic Torrent of thorns you still have reason to apprehend: Which though the least of the final Events you have to guard against, is still too weighty to be overlooked or flighted. Think often what anguish it must give to a soul confirmed in the Almighty's grace, and glowing with the intenfest love and defire of God (as the most imperfect of God's departed elect all are) to find itself naturally qualified and capable of enjoying its fovereign only Good; and yet violently detained in misery at a distance from that Good. Think often (I say) on this to awaken your charity for the relief of the departed fouls, who are in that distressful circumstance; that a fountain of pious prayers and works of mercy offered up to God in their behalf, may daily issue out of the house of the Lord, to water their torrent of spiritual thorns. And think on it often, to excite your own vigilance and exert all your efforts towards avoiding yourselves the like thorny distress. Thus will you effectually improve the holy fear of God within you. And that fountain of life thus improved, will so enrich your Souls with the mystic waters of perfect inward purity and cleanness of heart, that, when the natural period comes for you to be defolved and be with God, without being constrained to halt amidst a torrent of cruel disappointing suspence, the paradise of grace within you shall be instantly changed for a paradife of boundless everlasting Glory with God,

God, in whom you will eternally experience the accomplishment of his faithful promise by the mouth of his psalmist:—Blessed are the undefiled in the way: Which &cc.

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THE TORRENT OF THORNS:

Second Discourse on a Mid-State.

A river issued out of the place of pleasure, to water Paradice; which thence is divided into four Heads: (Gen. ii. 10.) And a fountain shall issue out of the house of the Lord; and shall water the torrent of thorns. (Joel iii. 18.)

HANKS to the joint affistance of those three faithful guides, Holy Scripture, Tradition and fober Reason, we attained in my last discourse, revered Auditors, to a discovery (and I prefume an unquestionable one) of the real existence of a Middle-State beyond the grave, an intermediate channel between the mystic floods of hell and heaven. In confequence of that discovery too, I then promised to lead your contemplation forward to the distressful borders of this mysterious channel; in order to our taking, at a nearer point of view, an attentive furvey of the miseries it abounds with. It is what therefore you have a right to expect from me now: And it is what I accordingly mean at prefent to perform. This Middle-State then is one of the objects the prophet Joelhad in view and my steriously pointedout in those figurative words, which make the fecond

second part of my text:—And a fountain shall issue out of the bouse of the Lord, and shall water the torrent of thorns. Where it is observable, that the prophet, according to some versions, calls it, the torrent of thorns; and, according to others, the valley of Sethim, that is, the valley of briars. And in fact both versions may be used with equal propriety, to explain the divine writer's meaning. For the same Middle-State, in a mystic Sense, may with the strictest truth be called both the one and the other: Being in different respects both a Torrent and a Valley, as most Torrents are

which are properly of the torrent kind.

IT is the nature of torrents, that are strictly and meerly fuch, to form themselves of a sudden conjunction of hasty showers of rain, which falling in manifold thick and hafty drops, and gathering as they fall, force their liquid passage from the furrounding mountains and clifts, through craggy and briary vales, in a channel of their own making : where eager to join their mother-ocean, they make no longer a stay, than they are compelled to by the pebbles and briars in their way; which retard them just enough to filter (as it were) and clear them of the flime they contracted in those clouds, which first decoyed them from their natural center. Their retardment, however, but renders their career the more impetuous: for the constant attraction of their parent element, the sea, not suffering them to settle, renders

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renders their current every where shallow, So that their channels are generally as replenished with briars and thorns during the flood, as they are at most times with gravel and slime. The like in some measure is mystically the case, with respect to that Torrent, or Valley of thorns beyond the grave, that Middle-State, through which the less perfect part of God's elect must take their purifying course, to fit them for reaching their natural center, the abyss of divine beatitude. It is wholly formed of the drops (as it were) of light transgressions, with which a part of their affections. while on earth, were fullied, and in some degree fevered (by clouds of worldly error, folly and diffipation) from that fource of divine Love to which they naturally belonged. And thefe, for want of the warmth of a timely repentance. and atonement before death, gathering beyond the grave, and falling with united force, fuffer them not to unite with their fovereign joy, till they have passed through the purifying channel of thorny Suspence in a Middle-State. Their certainty indeed of being after a time, united with that attractive Abyss of Joys renders the flood of their forrows but shallow, in comparison with the desolating flood of hell. But their eagerness to possess God, enhanced by their consciousness that they are at length to possess him, redoubles the impetuosity of their yearnings to be released from their violent state of detention, fo much the more, as that detention

tention (now that they have thrown-off the clogg of matter) is unnatural to them, and the fole effect of the slime they heedlessy contracted from their former too great attachment thereto.

SUCH then, revered Christians, is the Torrent, or Valley of thorny diftress prepared beyond the grave for as many of God's elect, as depart out of this life not fufficiently purified from every moral stain to be united to him immediately: Such is the painful Channel they must unavoidably pass through; and where, while they are detained in it, they must encounter as many sufferings as they have portions of the flime of earthly guilt to throwoff by atonement. But numerous and acute as their diftreffes are, there is every reason to judge, that all their other Sorrows are in some fense absorbed by the exquisite violence they must endure between two master-thorns, which incessantly sting them to excess, namely, the most just of all defires, ungratified; and the blackest of ingratitude, unprovoked. Master-thorns indeed, Christians! Which, as I hope to make appear to you, torment them with a two-fold superlative Anguish: The Anguish of disappointment, in being thus detained at a distance from the God, they intenfly yearn after and expected to possess: And the anguish of regret, in being thus detained, on account of their over-fondness for their earthly friends, and yet ungratefully forgotten

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gotten and neglected by their friends. Oh the redoubled sting! the complicated martyrdom! Who, but a God can help created souls to bear it with conformity? Who but that God can give me words to make you comprehend it, and win you to endeavour at removing it?

Chastener of thy beloved elect! assist me to shew these Christians the painful exile of thy departed suffering saints in its genuine wretchedness: That their distresses exciting us all to sympathise in their affliction, may cause a fountain of charitable succours to issue out of the house of the Lord, from the breasts of us all, enough to water their torrent of thorns so effectually, as to afford present benefit to them and suture safety to ourselves.

PHILOSOPHERS in general, as well as divines are agreed, that the Act of defire is an impetuous effort of the foul, to fally, as it were, out of itself in search of the absent, or unpossessed Good, which attracts it. So that defire is the parent of all those heart-rending emotions, which make the absence of any beloved Object tormenting. Some therefore call it a fierce persecutor; others, a pitiless tyrant; and others again, the most restless and cruel of all human passions: Nay many will have

it to be the grand created principle, which fers all the other passions in action; and the only one indeed from which they borrow their every power of tormenting: And there are not wanting reasons in support of this opinion. In fact, as the passion of love derives all the uneafy fenfations it is wont to produce in the human breast, from the vehement yearnings with which it purfues the real or fancied Good that attracts it: So does the passion of hatred owe all its felf-torture to the vehemence of its hankering after the removal of the offensive Object it dislikes: And if we run through all the passions one after another, we shall probably find, that their chief and sharpest sting is the restless activity of some lurking over-ruling defire, Well therefore might the philosopher, when asked, what was worse than death, make answer: " Life itself, where " death is defired." It is fo in fact, Such an implacable tormentor is intense defire ungratified, that death is preferable to it. Nay I say more: the severest tortures of this life are repose, are comfort, are enjoyment, if compared with ungratified defire which reaches to an excess.

If we cast but an eye of reflection on the patriarch Joseph, at his encounter with his brethren when they first presented Benjamin to him, we shall find, that, amidst all the pomp of a resplendent court, a sable cloud of distress loured over his brow, sufficient to indicate, that

his heart was stung with a thorn of inbred affliction, too acute for outward grandeur to affwage or blunt the edge of. On the contrary his vehement yearnings to embrace his dear uterine brother, rendered insupportable to him the princely dignity he could not throw-off; only because that dignity retarded the gratification of his impatient wishes. For so extreme was the eagerness of desire he burned with, to hug that fondled object of his fraternal affections to his breaft, while prudence compelled him to restrain and conceal it, that " his very bowels (says St. Ambrose) were " convulled with the violence he thereby did " to nature." And therefore, that nature might not fink under the rugged trial, Joseph hastily retired to give some relief to his inward anguish, and foften the thorn which tormented him, with a torrent of tears. Joseph (says the facred historian) made haste; for bis bowels were convulsed with yearning over his brother: and the tears gushed-out: and be retired into bis chamber and wept there. Or if we turn our thoughts to Absalom, while banished from the presence of his royal offended parent; we shall find him in like manner plunged in a torrent of insupportable grief, occasioned wholly by the disappointment of his eager wishes to be admitted to the presence of his sovereign and father. And so insupportable was his grief in reality, that he declaredly gave death the preference to a life thus embittered by the incessant torture

of ungratified desire, " Ah cried the distref-" fed prince, ! I befeech, that I may fee the king's " face : and then if be be mindful of my iniquity; " even let bim kill me, I am willing to " die." Finally, if we turn our attention to the spouse of the Canticles, her too we may behold hurried out of herself by the vehement transports of disappointed defire: And though covered-over with wounds, purpled-over with her blood, still shall we find her wandering, half-breathless, through the streets and public ways, enquiring, feeking, yearning after her beloved spouse, every where with moving accents calling after the darling object of her wishes, whose presence she considers as the only balm that can affwage and heal the wounds of disappointed love. They bave smitten me, they have wounded me, She cries: I conjure ye, ob daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye acquaint bim, that I languish for love. Such then is the dolorous efficacy of vehement defire not gratified, to torment without measure and rack without ceasing the hearts it takes possession of.

And yet, after all, what kind of defires do these sew instances help us to form an idea of? what kind of desires, Isay, but meer impersect ones, scarce worthy of the name? what but meer spiritless wishes, conceived by souls as yet immersed in matter, still confined within the sless, and consequently void of that vivacity, which is inseparable from unbodied

spirits?

spirits? If then meer imprisoned, shackled, languid appetites can, while unfated, give fuch grievous pain; think Christians, I befeech you, how much greater the anguish must be of God's departed favorites in a Middle-State: Where they are incessantly desiring with unbounded ardour to embrace him, yet forcibly detained from his defirable divine embraces. Ah! pointless and blunted is the thorn of every earthly disappointment compared with Theirs. For there Their wishes are the pure and spirited exertions of unencumbered Souls; of fouls, which, being no longer pinioned-down by matter, no longer entangled by their clay (like feathered animals perplexed with bird-lime), no longer obstructed by the flesh from acting with their native freedom and intenfeness, can defire nothing but with lively vehemence, nor be restrained from their desire but with the utmost painful violence to their nature. And therefore as their yearnings exceed every earthly desire, so their anguish must surpass every earthly affliction.

It is a well known matter of fact, revered Christians, that by the same degrees and in like proportions as a tormenting passion gains ground in the soul, the sensation of its smart encreases in acuteness. The affliction of holy Job from his manifold losses by the destruction of his flocks, his houses, his wealth and samily, reached not to its utmost excess of bitterness all at once. No; but as the torrent

of ill-tidings augmented, the flood of his grief swelled higher and higher. For a while it was confined within the bounds of discretion. and made no external appearance but in moderate fallies, till the last fatal tale tore him with violence from himfelf; wounding his very foul with as many insupportable daggers, as the lives he seemed bereft of in the children which were untimelily fnatched from his paternal embraces. Then it was, and not till then, that, all moderation deferting his grief, he found himfelf no longer able to keep-in the tide of his grief, or damm-up the flood of overwhelming forrow within him. Wherefore, as the facred writer tells us, he then flarted-up (and as if he meaned to force a passage for his afflicted Soul) be tore-off his garments. For now (alas!) the enormous torrent of his anguish bearing down before it all his natural powers of refiftance, compelled his fpirits to give way to that deluge of distress, which vented itself in tears through his eyes, in groans through his lips, and in tumors and ulcers through his every pore. Ah! what had been the case then, if his Afflictions had rushed upon him all at once, before his leffer griefs had prepared him for enduring the last extremes of woe? Doubtless (without a miracle) he must have sunk beneath the intolerable load. But that almighty faithful Being, who suffers not his creatures to be tempted beyond their strength (to proportion the trial of his servant to his capacity of bearing it) mercifully

mercifully disposed that a gradual succession of leffer evils should dispose him for enduring the most oppressive ones without being crushed by their unweildly weight. Not such the indulgence shewn to the less perfect part of the deceased Elect, whose venial transgressions obfruct their immediate entrance into blifs. No. Sacred Souls! Confirmed as ye are in never-failing grace, there is no fear, that any rigours of your offended, but still loving and beloved God and parent, will shake your filial submission to his chastening rode And therefore, to purify and fit you for himself the fooner, he fuffers all the force of his amending justice to fall at once upon you, as soon as ye depart from hence. In fact, Christians, not to mention their other manifold diffreffes proportioned, during their detention, to the number and weight of their imperfections; there needs no other circumstance to call for all our christian pity, than this,-that from the instant of their shaking-off the body of this death, their defires of possessing God are too intense to admit of any encrease of vehemence: And therefore from that instant also, the thorny painful sting of their disappointment can receive no augmentation of acuteness. Who then can help feeing and concluding from this fingle circumstance of sudden woe in its heaviest last extreme, that the violence, with which the thorn of ungratified defire torments the imperfect Elect beyond the grave, is G 2

and must be the severest of all temporary pains? And how indeed can the case be otherwise with those sacred Spirits in their present state of unnatural suspence; when the Object of their wishes is nothing less than God himself? An Object infinitely superior to every other desireable Good, and indeed the only estable Good.

fential felf-existing Good. I alvo? beroad ovi

AGAIN, one of the immediate bleffed fruits of that inamiffible grace, in which the Almighty's less perfect Blect are bonfinned at their departure out of this life, is, that, beyoud the grave, they effectually throw-off, with their earthly burden every earthly attachment; all their affections are thenceforth wholly and unalterably centered in God, their now more clearly known hipreme and only Joy: An inestimable Bleffing this, which fealing their everlafting predeftination, is a certain earnest and pledge of the hibstantial glory, which is infallibly to be revealed in them as foon as they are compleatly purified from every venial guilt. But then (alas!) fo long as they have aught about them of imperfect, to obstruct their entrance to that glory, the same inestimable Bleffing (by unspeakably augmenting their amorous yearnings after the lovely Object they are still deprived of, though capable by nature of enjoying it) cannot but marpen immensely the thorn of their present disappointment. And what must still farther aggravate the dolorous effect of that temporary difbas

disappointment, is, their consciousness of being so very near the Blis they are detained from a parted from it, as they are, only by the slen-

dereft feparation are added bloom noth tanW

IT is, I presume, pretty generally known and avowed, that every ungratisted defire is more or less tormenting, in proportion to the greater or less ardour which attends it: And nothing is more capable of inflaming that ardour to a superlative degree, than the nearness of the defired Object. How far this fentiment is true, let your own hearts be judges: You whose hearts are not quite Arangers to the pangs of ungratified affection. You, I fay, oh tender parents! fond and grateful children! And you, oh generous Souls of every state, whom genuine virtuous love and friendship warm! But chiefly fuch among you as by experience know what it is to have a dear loyed parent, spouse, or child, of other friend and favorite of the heart, long absent in a diftant land, will best conceive the force of this. For ah! how often have you longed to grafp the beloved creature in your arms! how many times have not your eager spirits made impetuous efforts to fally from your bosom, and travelled, in many a painful figh and anxious wish, over distant feas and through unpractifed Climates, to hug the fondled image to your breafts in fancy? And yet, while you have thought that favorite: Object at an unconquerable distance from your pain has been moderate and your כנפל yearnings

yearnings prudent. But in proportion, as you have found the distance lessening, how has not moderation and discretion dwindled? What then would be the case, were ye to take a long, laborious, dangerous voyage in purfuit of the favorite Object of your amorous wishes; and after many a frightful storm and rude encounter, anchored at length with fafety in the harbour, where you were fure to meet with all you had fought for, you were still compelled to make a tedious quarantain before you might approach the darling of your foul? Nay more, what if, even after all, lodged beneath the felf-fame common roof beside that darling, with but perhaps a slight partition or a flimfey curtain to part you from it, you were still denied (I will not fay for years, or months, but) only for an hour, the privilege to burst that boundary, to lift that curtain, and fly to its embraces? oh what a pointed thorn would not that short retardment prove to you, while it lasted! what tongue could utter the anguish it would give your foul? To what an unmeasurable height would not your fond defires be enflamed! how would not your spirits, all on float, prey on your vitals ! and how would not that hour appear to you an Age, and every minute of it keep you on an infufferable rack! But your own hearts, if they have any fense of tenderness about them, will best resolve you. For the rest, this feems to have been the very case of the fareachings cred

cred Spoule of the Canticles. While She supposed her Beloved afar off, the weary steps the took, the rude fatigues the endured, and the stripes and wounds and infults she received in feeking after him from place to place, feemed only to augment her courage. But once she returned to her native home, and was informed that the dear Object of her fearches was there and still absconded from her; oh! then, how did not all her courage droop and all her pains encrease! Such was the exquisite degree to which her anguish swelled, when finding he was so very near, she found withal, that she was not as yet to be indulged with his enchanting presence; that, able no longer to bear the oppressive smart, she was forced (with violence to nature) to wish, that during so fiery a trial, he might at least withdraw to a greater distance, thereby to mitigate the intolerable ardour of her yearning. " Oh, she cries! " dearly beloved Brother suckled at the breast " of my mother ! fince I may not as yet em-" brace thee; who will grant me at least, that " I find thee to be still abroad; rather than " parted from me when so near." Oh sacred departed spouses of lovely Jesus, who are not yet admitted to his enlivening presence! how nearly does not your present state of dolorous fuspence resemble this? when one of the acutest thorns of disappointment which torment you, is the afflicting thought that ye are now fo near him, and nevertheless denied as yet the

privilege of possessing him. Oh the martyrifing thought! To be derained amidst a torrent of pains, equal (if we may believe the holy Fathers) to those of hell in every other circumstance, than that they are not eternal i in a torrent of thorny forrows, where nothing is covered but God; and still to be deprived of God! To know that one momentary fpring would change their thorns to laurels, their thraldom to liberty, and all their grief to endless joy; and yet to be restrained for a time from taking that fpring! and yet, I fay, to be forcibly held in a Valley of diffress, deprived of that blissful inheritance which is prepared for them! Ah! if this be not the acutest of all temporary thorns, the keenest of all transient dolours; I know not what can be fo. fact not even the great Saint Augustin, with all his extensive comprehension, could think of any equal to it: " On the contrary, fays this " inspired Father, This is a torture of so acute " a nature, that no meer temporary pains, " within the reach of human knowledge, de-" ferve to be compared with it.

MEAN-TIME, oh Christians, this is probably the afflicted state of some of your own Ancestors, and offspring, and departed Intimates: perhaps of a once fond parent; of a fondled child; of a brother, sister, husband, wife, or friend, or neighbour. This Religion teaches you; and you yourselves are conscious of it. Can you then be sensible of this, and your

your bowels not dissolve with compassion for them? Can you, who are Christians, be indifferent to the extreme diftress of such illustrious fufferers, all your generous friends; when an Alexander, though a pagan, could not refrain from weeping over the less substantial miseries of Darius his enemy? Those sacred souls, I need not tell you, were most of them so far from ever being enemies to any of you; that many of them, while on earth, held nothing here so dear to them as yourselves. And though some few of Them might seem to act with enmity to some of You; it is certain now, that they did not really do so; or, if they did, they repented of it before they died: Since otherwise they could not have attained to the state of safety they enjoy. And even in the wrongs they did, or feemed to do you in this life, they were indeed your effential friends, by affording you therein a certain means to fecure your own eternal happiness by your forgiveness. But granting that all those sacred sufferers were utter strangers to you in the flesh, or even open adversaries; their charity in death extended to you all: and now they are, in common with you, precious members of Christ's mystic Body; confirmed in grace and linked to you by the inviolable bands of catholic communion and truly christian charity. Whatever then they may have been, they are now become your cordial friends and near allies. They who once loved you perfonally.

fonally, now love you with a purer and more perfect tenderness than ever: And all in general glow with the friendliest warmest wishes of eternal happiness to every one of you. Yet ah! how very thankless a return do not too many of you make them, for all their love and charity? Alas! I fear, I may with justice fay, that some of you, instead of sympathising in their fufferings, are more affiduous to sharpen them. Yes: And Heaven grant it be not (to your heavy judgment) fadly true,-that the fouls of God's departed elect, who are languishing for the present in a Middle-State of expiation, have not, amidst their thorny forrows, one outward instrument of anguish, that stings them more severely, than the ingratitude of their furviving friends; if friends they must or can be called.

THAT God, their offended parent, do correct them with his amending stripes; the grace they abound with and their consciousness of having drawn that correction on themselves enables them to bear with conformity. But ah! what argument of conformity can they find in that cruel ingratitude, with which their kindred and pretended friends often aggravate their fufferings. Wounds which are given by the hand of a supposed friend are never of a common kind. The stab of false friendship is like a dagger tempered with poison: It opens no wound, without letting in more deaths than one. We read in Holy Writ, that Joab planted

planted in Absalom's breast three several launces. And if we could also read in that young prince's heart, we should probably find, that the bitter circumstance of the hand which directed all the three was incomparably more painful than the launces themselves. was his kinfman and his pretended friend. That this very Joab then, this kinfman, this pretender to friendship, instead of giving him the relief he had a right to expect, should be the very monster who took advantage of his distress, to bathe his perfidious hands in his blood! oh! That (I imagine) must have pierced the very soul of Absalom with a more deadly envenomed complicated wound than all the launces of Joab's whole army could have done. thoughtless Christians then! You, I mean, who act the part of unnatural Joab by your departed friends and fellow-members of Christ's mystic body! Hear the reproaches they have a right to make you by the mouth of holy Job: "Why do ye persecute us, as God? and why " do ye feed on our flesh? By what have we " deferved to be abandoned by you in our " diftress; we who now suffer in our spiritual " interests for having been too anxious for your " temporal advantage? is this all the return " our tenderness deserves at your hands: That " you should ungratefully neglect us after " death, and grudge us in time of need a few " prayers and alms and fasts and works of " mercy, out of that substance, which, to our H 2 " present

" present cost, we were too eager in hoarding-up for you? Why do ye persecute us as " God, by fuffering us to languish at a dis-" tance from him; able as many of ye are to pour-forth, out of the very superfluities of " what we have left you, a fountain of chari-" table fuccours to water our torrent of thorns, and free us from this valley of forrows? " Why do ye rather, with your shameful neg-" lect of us, feed and fatten on our flesh? that " is (fays a venerable writer) why do ye feed " and fatten on that substance, we earned or " hoarded for you, at the expence of fo much " fweat and care before death, and of so much " anguish after death, without regard to our " distress? Oh Children! Brethren! Huf-" bands! Wives! or Heirs! Oh Kindred! " Friends and Intimates! that God detain " us in this thorny state of expiation, till the " last farthing of the debt we owe him be dif-" charged, either by our own thorny forrows in this mystic valley of suspence, or by a spi-" ritual fountain of charitable succours sent " forth by you to water the torrent of thorns, " appointed to chaften us; is a dispensation " worthy of his divinely impartial justice. "Thoughtless creatures as we have been, we " deserve it all; for that, by loving you too " much, we loved him less than we might " and should have done. But that You, for " the too inordinate love of whom, we have " brought at least a part of our present for-" rows

" rows on ourselves, should swell our distress with your unmerited indifference for us; oh! 'tis a thorn of black ingratitude, " which adds a fresh kind of sting to all our " other fufferings already beyond conception " great: A sting so much the more acute, the " less we expected such unthankful usage at " your hands." And have not those facred fufferers but too much cause to make such reproaches to many of you? Keen as the anguish of an Agrippina must have been, at feeing herself devoted to destruction by unnatural Nero, the very monster, who owed her (under heaven) his life as well as empire; how much keener must not the forrow be of your departed friends in a Middle-State, to find themselves detained in a torrent of the most thorny distress, at a distance from God, for creatures they so greatly loved? and (oh the cruel aggravation!) detained there much longer then they need be, through the unnatural neglect of those very creatures, whom they fatally loved too much?

THAT you may the better conceive all the horror such ingratitude deserves, let me try to make their case for a minute in some measure your own. Imagine then that after a horrible wreck at sea, you were to find yourselves tossed by the tumultuous waves almost within touch of the shore: Where, after many a useless effort to gain the land, when just on the point of sinking breathless under

the foaming furge, lo! to your comfort, you efpy a gathering croud upon the beech, all attentive to your unavailing struggles. How would not then your feeble limbs try to fummon-up new vigour to contend for life? how would not then the language of your eyes invoke with earnestness their succour, though your breath were too far fpent to do it? And if able to relieve you, they cruelly forbore to do fo; what bitterness would not their indifference add to your Affliction? But how much greater still must not that bitterness be; if they, who refused you their aid, were the very perfons for whose sakes you had met that ruin? Ah, methinks! not the rage of the fea, nor the death you were struggling with, could have any horrors in them to equal fuch a circumstance. And yet, Christians, all this falls short of what your departed friends in a Middle-State, must feel from your neglects of helping them. They (alas!) are incessantly yearning after God in a torrent of thorny disappointment: And you, who are members of the house of the Lord, have it in your power to haften their deliverance with a copious fountain of prayer and good works. To You therefore they apply for piety and pity in their behalf. Of You they demand affiftance by all the love they bore you when they lived upon earth, and by the mutual love they have a right to now they are deceased; by the facred ties of nature and grace; of country, blood.

blood, acquaintance, friendship, charity, and that communion of faints, which you enjoy in common with them; and by that grateful remembrance they will have of your endeayours to relieve them. On You, in a word, they (or their sufferings for them) are incessantly calling in those other words of Holy Job. --Have pity on us, bave pity on us, at least ye our friends: for the hand of God has touched us. Can you then (oh Christians!) be deaf to their just cries? Can you be insensible to the woe they endure, perhaps on your account; perhaps for failings which your example, provocation, counsel, or enticement drew them into? Can you, oh orthodox Believers, fuffer them to linger in pain for want of the aid you have the power to give them? You who know and profess, that there is beyond the grave a Middle-State, where God's deceased Elect not perfectly free from venial guilt, must expiate that guilt by their own fufferings, or by your mediating piety? No: it cannot be, that You, who believe this truth, can have the heart, instead of being their advocates, to become their perfecutors. And yet there is no medium between the two extremes. Not to use all our efforts to shorten their distress, or at least relieve them in it, with our prayers and good works, is in fact being their perfecutors and adding to the thorn of their disappointment of immediate glory, the bitter sting of our unnatural thankless indifference. "And " He

"He (as even a pagan Seneca could observe)
"He, who can save a person from perishing,

" and does not, may be faid to kill him."

LET us then, revered Auditors, rouse our fleeping compassion in the behalf of those sacred fuffering fouls, who are all fo dear to God; who have many of them held us dear to them on earth; and who now deferve that we should hold them dear to us. If I want eloquence to paint their forrows as they really are; where is the wonder? when Angels scarce are equal to the task. But you have fenie and piety: Employ them both then to guess from the little I have said, the much I have omitted for want of words and time. And yet, what more need there to be faid, to melt with pity the hearts, I will not fay of generous Christians, like yourselves but even of Barbarians

What fruit then, Christians, may I hope, that God's departed suffering Elect will reap from your compassion? Will you henceforth exert your charitable efforts to soften their pains and shorten their confinement, by redoubling your devotion, lessening your extravagances, and augmenting your works of mercy? Are You, oh men, resolved to break with vice; to conquer your passions and bad habits; your lusts, intemperences and other misseeds, in order to labour more efficaciously for the releasement or relief of those illustrious sufferers? Will you, oh semales, sanctifying your native

tive tenderness of fex, try henceforth to benehi them; by laying afide your vanities, backbitings, diffipations, affected airs, and bufy idlings; in order the more effectually to work and watch and fast and pray them out of the thorny vale of dolours in which they are detained? In a word, will open war be declared by you All against the devil, the world and the flesh; the better to qualify yourselves for mediating between God and his departed languishing spouses? Ah yes, sacred Souls! I hope it will be so. These Christians are faithful members of Christ's mystic body, Coheirs with You to his heavenly ferufalem, and living parts of his bouse on earth. I trust therefore, that in Their Future piety You will find a plentiful fountain iffue-out of the bouse of the Lord, to water your torrent of thorns. This, this is that mystic fountain, Joel feems to speak of, which makes all the rivers of Judab flow with waters; by transfering God's Elect to those realms of blis where they are to be absorbed in floods of unspeakable glory. This, I hope, by the future affiduity of living Christians, will shortly wash-away your every present thorn; bear-down before it every obstacle in your way to Heaven; and enable the fream of divine Fear within you to join that abyfs of divine Love, whence it first iffued-forth, to water the paradife of your faithful hearts. Courage then, oh suffering faints! all here, I hope, declare for you. All here, I trust, will hencehenceforth act the part, not of perfecutors, but of friends; to release you, with their fastings, watchings, prayers and alms and other works of justice and of mercy, from the torrent of distress you are in, and transfer you to that ocean of joys which you are yearning after, and which is ready for you.

IF this news (so desirable to God's departed. still fuffering Elect) be verified by You, beloved Christians; as I trust in your piety, it will be; I have gained my point. There is an end to my discourse; And it becomes high time for My less delicate expressions to make way for the more eloquent language of Your actions. Go then, and fee what you can do for your departed friends, the friends of God; who want your affiftance; who truly deferve t; and who will be eternally grateful to you for it. Go, for their takes and your own, and henceforth love justice, pursue mercy, renounce your vices, practife virue, conquer your bad habits, try to grow rich in good ones; and daily (while you are doing all this) offer fome facrifice to God in favour of his fuffering Elect. Thus will your piety have a two-fold efficacy; Like a plentiful fountain, issuingout of the bouse of the Lord, on one hand it will water and remove their torrent of thorns, and on the other it will wash you so clean in this life from every moral stain, that you yourfelves may possibly escape the cruel disappointment and violence of the like thorns in the next.

next. For, by constantly reminding you of what They are suffering and of what has brought their present sufferings on them, it will naturally lead you to reflect on the heavy and bitter confequences of those imperfections, which You are tempted to fet fo light by at present, and will dispose you for effectually guarding against them for the future. A In short by these means the filial Fear of God within you will become daily more and more perfect; and after watering and enriching the spiritual paradife of your hearts with plenty of grace and christian virtues, that facred mystic ftream will flow-back with all your affections to that sovereign abys of uncreated Love; that only place of substantial pleasure, whence it first ifficed-forth: So that your fouls will be fo perfectly purified from every drofs of fin on this fide the grave, that, without needing to pass through the bitter retardment of a torrent of thorny expiation on the other, you will immediately drown your every fear in a flood of substantial universal joys; where, in reward of your prefent charity to your needy friends departed, you will eternally experience the truth of God's promise by his plalmist : Bleffed is He, who considereth the needy and poor. In the evil day our Lord will deliver him. -nu na ni nad v la 12 31 62

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